

HOW TO LOSE \$10m ON A MUSICAL

The art of making a Broadway flop, PAGE 34

PRETTY AS A PICTURE

The artist of shoe making
STYLE PAGE 14

NEW YEAR, NEW JOB

TODAY
Nigella Lawson on working mothers, P15
PLUS
free personal profile
TOKEN 3 PAGE 21

TOMORROW

THE DOUBLE JOBS GUIDE
Extra 36 pages
THE TIMES 3
THE TIMES 21

Campaign goes against government policy

Princess's call for mines ban upsets ministers

By Alice Thomson and Alan Hamilton

DIANA, Princess of Wales, has annoyed ministers by going against government policy with her call for a world ban on anti-personnel landmines.

The Princess, who is in Angola to publicise the Red Cross's anti-landmine campaign, is accused of straying into the political arena and of being influenced towards Labour.

The Government's policy is that the sort of mines found in Angola should be banned, but that "smartmines", which self-destruct after a limited life, should remain available to defend troops in danger. Labour wants a total ban.

One minister said yesterday: "She is ill-advised and is not being helpful or realistic. Britain is one of the goodies on landmines and we are helping to draw up a sensible worldwide compromise package. We do not need a loose cannon like her."

He spoke as the Princess, on the second day of her four-day tour, confronted the injuries caused by 20 years of civil war. An artificial limb centre in a shanty town outside Luanda, she met dozens of amputees, most of whom had been maimed by stepping on mines.

Today she is expected to don body armour and walk through a carefully cleared area to demonstrate a mine's remote control.

The Princess decided to lead her support to the campaign after attending a Red Cross briefing session where she agreed that the world death toll from landmines was daunting. On arriving in Angola on Monday, she told reporters that the statistic of one amputee per 334 inhabitants proved the need for the international community to ban the weapons.

Her remarks irritated ministers because the Foreign Office had

advised her of the Government's position before she left Britain. Labour, while supportive, was also surprised by her approach.

Tom Clark, Shadow Defence Secretary, said: "We think there should be a ban on all trade, import, export, transfer and manufacture of landmines in Britain. It is something we have got to work for worldwide, and we can start in Britain. What the Princess is trying to do is raise awareness and we wish her well. We are pleased that she has taken the same view as us." Another Labour source said: "We were amazed that Diana was prepared to speak up against something the Government is so sensitive about."

The Red Cross was delighted by the attention her endorsement of its campaign attracted. Johannes Doran, the campaign co-ordinator said: "She is very popular with the British public and will be very successful. We hope she will be able to influence the Government."

Forty-four countries have already banned anti-personnel mines but others, including America, Russia, China and South Africa, are firmly against any ban.

In Britain, the Government's policy is to seek a moratorium on the production and export of mines while working towards a worldwide ban. No anti-personnel mines have been exported from Britain for five years, the forces do not use them at present, and more than half of the country's stockpile will be destroyed in the next few years.

The old-fashioned mines will, however, be replaced by "smartmines", for use in exceptional circumstances. A minister would then have to be convinced that troops were in danger and the mines would be placed in marked areas. The Defence Ministry said: "We need to

work with the international community. A unilateral ban would reduce fatalities in the Third World."

But Lou McGrath, head of the Mines Advisory Group which trains people to clear mines in Angola, Iraq, Laos and Cambodia, said the Princess's contribution was vital. "The Government has said it wants a moratorium on export and production. But it still insists on smartmines which are only effective for short periods. The problem is that smartmines fail easily and they are very expensive. We must have a worldwide total ban."

During her visit to the Neves Bendinha amputee centre yesterday, the Princess heard tales of misery. As she tried to comfort Adriana Paulino, a 23-year-old soldier who lost both legs to a mine, she turned to reporters and said: "It's horrific, isn't it. This puts everything into perspective."

She then stroked and cuddled Sandra Tigica, 13, who was waiting for a plaster cast to be made of the scarred stump where her left leg used to be.

Mr Paulino was of many maimed MPLA government soldiers who attempted to parade for the Princess. Most had never heard of her, but they recognised that she was an international figure likely to publicise their plight. "I don't know who she was," Mr Paulino said, "I am just very happy that she came to talk to me. I want people to know what happened."

Earlier the Princess had been taken to Kikolo, another shanty town, where she visited an antenatal clinic supported by the Red Cross. There, she cradled babies and met Odete Valentine, a 14-year-old girl who lost her left leg foraging for food in a minefield.



Sandra Tigica, 13, was one of a stream of amputees who met Diana, Princess of Wales, yesterday

Hurd will lead critics of Tory prison policies

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent and Robert Crampton

DOUGLAS HURD is to spearhead the drive for a more sparing use of imprisonment for offenders and better conditions in jails by becoming the next chairman of the Prison Reform Trust.

The trust has been in the forefront of the fight against Michael Howard's "prison works" policy and proposals for the introduction of US-style automatic minimum sentences for repeat burglars and dealers in hard drugs.

Today Mr Hurd, who is a former Conservative Home Secretary and who succeeds Jon Snow, the newsreader, in the trust chairmanship, makes thinly veiled criticisms of Mr Howard's law and order initiative, saying that it amounts to a serious reduction in judicial independence.

In an interview with *The Times*, Mr Hurd also rebukes the Government for introducing such controversial and far-reaching proposals in the run-up to a general election. "The immediate electoral preoccupation is probably not the best way of producing good measures," he says.

Mr Hurd's remarks come after a pre-emptive strike last year by Lord Taylor of Gosforth, the former Lord Chief Justice. Other senior members of the judiciary will renew the attack when the measure is debated in the House of Lords this month.

Mr Hurd said that although Mr Howard has "wisely" allowed for exceptions to minimum sentences, he wants to hear what that means and how it would work in practice. Although Mr Hurd avoids direct criticism of Mr Howard, he expresses doubts about the rigidity of the initiative.

Continued on page 2, col 4

Hurd interview, page 12

EC renews threat to BA link

By Jill Sherman and Philip Webster

THE row between London and Brussels over the proposed alliance between British Airways and American Airlines escalated last night as the European Commission announced that it was investigating the deal.

The threats enraged Euro-sceptics at Westminster who saw it as another example of meddling in British affairs. Sir Teddy Taylor said: "This is just one of an increasing number of examples where the EU stretches the powers in the treaties to interfere with almost every aspect of our way of life and our business activities."

Officials later conceded that although Mr Lang was responsible for the decision, it was possible that the case could still be taken to the European Court of Justice.

Mr Lang, back in London last night after a six-day trip to the Indian subcontinent with John Major, was "very surprised" by the threat from Mr van Miert.

He refused to comment further until he had read the full letter but said legislation had been passed with the approval of the EC stipulating that the British Government was the "competent authority" to consider the European implications.

to take Britain to the European Court of Justice if it approved the deal, claiming the transatlantic alliance was "anticompetitive".

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But Mr Ayling insisted on BBC Radio 4's Today programme yesterday that threats of court action would not halt the proposed alliance. He was particularly aggrieved about the Brussels' intervention, claiming other American-European air alliances had not been scrutinised.

Mr van Miert, speaking on BBC Radio later, claimed that was a lie, saying: "We are investigating other alliances as well. This is well known and we made it public months ago."

Ayling defiant, page 25

BT cuts cost of overseas phone calls

By Eric Reguly

BRITISH Telecom cut the cost of international telephone calls by as much as 37 per cent yesterday and said more reductions were likely as competition heats up in the overseas market.

The new prices, which come into effect on February 19, will see five-minute daytime calls to America and Canada, BT's most popular overseas routes, fall from £1.49, including VAT, to £1.19, a reduction of 20 per cent. Competitors said their prices were still lower.



Dalglish takes over Newcastle

Kevin Dalglish, the former manager of Liverpool and Blackburn (above), was appointed to be in charge of Newcastle United in succession to Kevin Keegan.

Dalglish, who is 45, said: "I couldn't refuse the job. Kevin has left a great foundation for me to build on." Page 48



Calcott: made a profit

Yes, we have Tesco bananas

By Damian Whitworth

HE IS fitted in the streets as the Banana Man of Worcester. Realising that a Tesco special offer was ripe for exploitation, a physicist bought more than a third of a tonne of his favourite fruit, gave it all away for free and still made a profit on the deal.

In what must be regarded as one of the greatest ever exploitations of a supermarket bargain offer, Phil Calcott, 28, effectively succeeded in making his local store pay him to take away its own produce.

The offer, which is running nationally until the end of this week, stipulates that for every purchase of a 3 lb bunch of bananas at £1.17p, a customer

will gain 25 Tesco Club Card points. These can be used to redeem goods worth £1.25. "I did a mental calculation and it seemed you couldn't lose. Basically they were paying shoppers eight pence to take away 3 lb of bananas," said Mr Calcott, who works for a government defence establishment.

He promptly asked the store to load up his car with the bananas and, after some consultation, staff agreed. He returned for another load the next day and eventually spent £367.38 buying 942 lb of the fruit. This earned him almost 8,000 Tesco Club Card points and about £25 profit — although it must be spent on goods at the store.

"At one stage my living room was stacked from floor to ceiling with 25 cases containing around 3,000 bananas," Mr Calcott said. He then set about giving them away.

"They were better than free so I thought my friends, neighbours and the denizens of Worcester could do with them. I've always fancied standing on the street and seeing people's reactions when you give them something for free. Some were dreadfully suspicious and thought there must be a catch to it. But they went quite quickly and by the

time I finished queues were building up.

"Children in the street now shout 'Banana Man' whenever they see me. Yesterday Continued on page 2, col 3



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TV & RADIO	46, 47
WEATHER	24
CROSSWORDS	24, 48

LETTERS	17
OBITUARIES	19
SIMON JENKINS	16

ARTS	34-36
CHESS & BRIDGE	42
COURT & SOCIAL	18

SPORT	43-46, 48
STYLE	14
HOMES	21

No whiff of grapeshot, but Soames of the Hussars has a good war

"IS MY Right Hon friend [Defence Secretary Michael Portillo] aware, that when the hon Member for Crawley [Armed Forces Minister Nicholas Soames] was an 11th Hussars officer fighting for Queen and country, the Rt Hon gentleman the Leader of the Opposition [Tony Blair] and 12 of his cronies were crawling around Greenham Common in CND T-shirts with their legs and arms in the air, ready to give up...?" the rest was drowned in belows. The wonderful thing about

a question from David Evans (C. Welwyn & Hatfield) is that it may come, borne upon a raft of assertions each one of which, taken individually, is absurd, doubtful, grammatically defective, physically impossible, wholly inexplicable, or just plain wrong — yet you always know what he means. He has a point.

His question yesterday to the Defence Secretary was ludicrous. When Mr Soames was a Hussars officer, Tony Blair was 14, the Greenham women hardly born. The

three years Soames spent with the Hussars, from 1967, passed during peacetime. There were no Mafekings to relieve or Khyber Passes to brave. Few doubt that this gallant man would be celebrated as Soames of Khar-toum, Burma Soames or Nick "Zulu" Soames. If only Fate had given him the chance, but Fate never did. Instead he became Equerry to Prince Charles — further from the whiff of grapeshot than the Greenham women.

And it is simply untrue that Tony Blair joined these women. In youth he was more likely to be found clad in a white cassock, on his knees in prayer, than in a muddy tent among militant women with hairy armpits. Nobody, not even Mr Blair, is capable of crawling with their legs or arms in the air, let alone both. All Mr Evans meant was

that Mr Soames was once in the Army and Mr Blair was once a supporter of nuclear disarmament. But he had a point. His Tory nautes came roaring to his support.

Yesterday at least, Soames had a good war. Evans can be forgiven for picturing him as some kind of heavyweight lancer, for Nicholas Soames

seems to come from a bygone age. Rescuing himself in mid-syllable from calling the Army "the infantry" he joshed Labour's principal defence spokesman, Dr David Clark, for having proposed (he claimed) a sword-in-ploughshares reincarnation of the British weapons industry.

The Labour Front Bench came back hard. Soames's opposite number, Dr John Reid, taunted him over press reports that Conservative Central Office have banned



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Soames from television throughout the general election campaign — "because he's too much of a toff". This provoked laughter on all sides, notably from Soames, who shook on the Front Bench, giggling massively.

Then he rose. Brandishing an issue of *Defence News*, he told MPs that an article there by Dr Reid was puffed on the cover as being by "Labour's Minister for the Shadow Armed Forces". Ensuing speculation over the Opposition's astonishing new defence strat-

egy caused hilarity, notably from Soames, who sat down hugging himself and chortling some more.

A jolly day. But we noticed one depressing change. Robbed in something rich and strange and outshining every other MP, Dame Jill Knight (C. Edgbaston) has for years dazzled and delighted us with her fiery. But yesterday she turned up in a sober suit of forest green and black. Has Dame Jill seen John Major's new hat in *The Times* — and accepted defeat?

Hogg sparks fresh row by snubbing mad cow inquiry

FROM CHARLES BREMMER IN BRUSSELS AND ANDREW PIERCE

A FURTHER confrontation between the Government and the European Union was triggered yesterday by Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, when he dismissed the threat of legal action over his refusal to give evidence to a European Parliament inquiry into BSE.

Mr Hogg, in a defiant performance which cheered Tory Euro-sceptics, said that European Parliament committees had no power to summon British ministers. "British ministers are accountable to the House of Commons. A number of members of the European Committee have aspirations to exercise a supervisory role over the ministers of sovereign states. I don't share that view. I don't think we should encourage those aspirations."

Mr Hogg was one of a number of senior politicians and EU officials called to give evidence to the four-month inquiry last year. But twice, to the fury of the European Parliament, he refused. He sent instead Richard Packer, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Mr Packer infuriated the inquiry committee when he claimed that BSE had been caused "largely by an act of God".

A draft report by the committee published yesterday was highly critical of Britain's handling of the BSE crisis. It listed 13 charges of maladministration, negligence and irresponsibility in dealing with the mad cow scare.

Reimer Böge, chairman of the inquiry, said yesterday Britain should be taken to the European Court over Mr Hogg's refusal to attend, which he said breached an agreement that member state ministers should co-operate with their work. He said the credibility of the European Parliament was at stake.

Herr Böge added: "The

legal position is clear. In domestic terms this is explosive stuff." Herr Böge, a German Euro-MP, repeated the challenge to Mr Hogg to face the committee. "It is quite clear that the minister has to come to a Committee of Inquiry if he is invited. If we let this matter pass, we will be setting a precedent for the future."

While Mr Hogg's uncompromising stance won support from Tory MPs, many of whom have been critical of his handling of the BSE crisis, Brussels observers predicted that legal action was unlikely to materialise. They believe Mr Hogg was deliberately flexing his muscles on an issue he knew he would win.

Speaking *The World at One* on BBC Radio, Mr Hogg brushed aside the legal threat. The minister, who has the support of Cabinet colleagues for his stance, said: "The question is whether a minister should be summoned by a European committee to give evidence. The clear answer to that is 'No'. There is no treaty basis for that. If they bring legal action of that kind, they will lose it."

Herr Böge is planning to table amendments to the report outlining the options for

legal action against Britain. The European Parliament will vote on the report on February 19, raising the possibility of legal moves against Britain before the general election.

The Prime Minister, who was returning from India yesterday, was kept up to date on developments. A Downing Street spokesman said: "We have always said that British ministers are answerable to Westminster. It is not for them to be summoned to the European Parliament."

A Tory official said that there was no prospect of ministers backing down. He said: "Douglas Hogg is neither going to give evidence nor end up in a court of law over this. Beef sales in Britain are restored virtually to their level before the BSE scare. A German chaired this committee. In Germany beef sales have not recovered at all. We take action. They carp."

Tory MPs rallied behind Mr Hogg yesterday. David Nicholson, secretary of the Tory backbench agriculture committee, said: "British ministers are absolutely within their rights in refusing to co-operate, particularly when the offensive and objectionable EU ban on British beef is still in place."

But Labour and the Liberal Democrats accused Mr Hogg of running scared over BSE which had damaged the prospects of an early lifting of the beef ban.

Gavin Strang, the Shadow Agriculture Minister, said: "Douglas Hogg should have taken the opportunity to spell out to the committee all the measures that we now have in place."

"He should have led from the front and put the position of the British Government, the minister's failings, and the damning indictment in the report, will not have helped Britain's efforts to get the beef ban lifted."



Hogg: unlikely to face legal action over BSE



First choice: Dr Watkins, who had a full examination

GPs given check-up by choosy villagers

A VILLAGE is thought to have become the first in the country to choose its own doctor.

Three shortlisted GPs were questioned by 60 local people in the village hall. One resident of every street was invited to the meeting by the local health authority which selected the three. After the hour-long meeting the villagers announced their choice: Nigel Watkins.

He will look after the health of 1,700 people in the former mining village of Bednogh, near Merthyr Ty-

fil, South Wales. Dr Watkins, 36, a father-of-two, said: "I was delighted when the patients decided to back me. I won't let them down."

Normally health authorities appoint GPs with advice from the Medical Practices Committee to ensure an even distribution of doctors throughout the country.

Gwyn Phillips, chief executive of Bro Taf health authority, said other communities should consider the system. He said: "It is important for a GP to have the full confidence of his patients."

Lawrence widow joins forces with royal trust

BY JOANNA BALE

FRANCES LAWRENCE, the widow of the murdered headmaster Philip Lawrence, is to join with the Prince's Trust to promote good citizenship and help to prevent the growth of violent crime among young people.

She will attend a private meeting at St James's Palace next month with senior representatives of charities, government departments and voluntary groups, co-ordinated by the trust, to discuss ways of putting her ideas into practice. Mrs Lawrence, who published her moral manifesto in *The Times* last year, said: "I am very keen to ensure that the large body of support shown for my manifesto is channelled into practical measures."

Dick Newby, the trust's communications director, said: "The purpose of the meeting is to take up and move forward some of the issues that Mrs Lawrence has raised." He added that the hundreds of people who wrote to Mrs Lawrence offering practical support would also be considered.

The Prince of Wales, who established the trust in 1976, will not be present at the meeting, but was said to be taking a "keen interest". The trust aims to help disadvantaged young people to succeed by providing training, education, financial assistance and business start-up advice.

Mr Newby added that Mrs Lawrence was not associated with the People's Trust, a new campaign funded by the chairman of Harrods, Mohamed Al Fayed, to put morality at the heart of government policy-making, despite reports that she had given it her backing.

Police are investigating a bogus letter sent to MPs which claims to be from Mrs Lawrence and makes anti-Semitic remarks about the Labour MP Greville Janner, a campaigner for Jewish causes. Mrs Lawrence has told police that she has no knowledge of such an organisation.

Leading article, page 17

Law firm sued over trainee's dysentery

A trainee solicitor who contracted shigella dysentery while abroad on a business trip is suing Freshfields, the City law firm, for more than £633,000 for loss of career as a lawyer, personal injury and distress. Kate Cawthorn, 25, claims Freshfields was negligent in failing to ensure she had the proper inoculations for her trip or give dietary or other advice. She has been unable to work since the trip to Ghana in 1994. Ms Cawthorn's writ, disclosed in *The Lawyer* magazine yesterday, also alleges that the firm failed to act promptly in sending her home when she developed diarrhoea and painful stomach pains.

Freshfields is resisting the claim. Ian Terry, its managing partner, said the firm was awaiting medical reports and was happy to sit down with Ms Cawthorn and resolve the issue.

Football riot arrests

Five men were arrested in England in connection with a football riot in Dublin two years ago. Four appeared in court and another is due in court today after Irish authorities issued extradition warrants after fighting at the international at Lansdowne Road between England and Ireland in February 1995. The National Criminal Intelligence Service said they would be charged with various offences in Ireland if the extraditions went ahead. The warrants were issued for alleged "offences of riot and violent disorder".

Showboat must go on

With only weeks before curtain-up, an amateur opera group in Belfast cannot find black performers to fill the central roles in a production of *Showboat*, the Jerome Kern musical about the American slave trade. The paucity of black people in Northern Ireland has left the Belfast Operatic Company unable to cast Queenie and Joe, and Willie Pyper, who is directing the week-long run at the Belfast Opera House in March, is urgently seeking black or Asian people. "They don't need to have acted or sung before," he said.

Call for rabies review

Relaxation of Britain's tough quarantine rules for rabies should be considered if alternative controls can be shown to be equally effective, the Pet Advisory Committee told the Government. It called for an urgent "risk assessment and feasibility study" of a system based on vaccination, blood tests and microchip identification with a view to easing the rules for dogs and cats from other European Union and rabies-free countries that proved workable.

Paedophile suspects list

British detectives are flying to the Philippines with a list of names of British paedophile suspects for Manila investigators. The team also hopes to learn of local intelligence on the operations of so-called child sex tourists from this country. The trip will prepare the way for operating the Sex Offenders Bill under which British courts can prosecute people for child sex offences abroad. Unicef estimates that 60,000 children are abused in the Philippines.

Father and sons on trial

A father and his two sons went on trial at Leeds Crown Court yesterday accused of murdering their mother, David Howells, 47, and his boys Glenn and John, who were 14 and 15 respectively at the time of the alleged killings in August 1995, deny the murder of Eve Howells, 48, a history and religious instruction teacher, in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. Mr Justice Allott, the trial judge, adjourned the hearing until tomorrow.

Beer cheers Bullimore

The rescued yachtsman Tony Bullimore drank his first beer after arriving on dry land yesterday. Mr Bullimore, who was released from hospital in Perth after treatment for frostbite, said it was a "sweet moment". "I have just had a beer, one little small glass of beer, and that was lovely," Mr Bullimore, who is 58 today, has had most of one finger removed but has been told by doctors that he will probably not need further surgery and should make a full recovery.

Free entry into lottery

About 21,000 National Lottery players who bought multi-draw tickets on January 4 are to get free entry into the draws up to March 1. To take account of the launch of Wednesday draws from February 5, the computer should have allowed players to stake numbers for up to five Saturdays. Instead, it accepted entries for the maximum eight weeks and entered them in the midweek draws. Some people could have discovered too late their numbers were not in the last few draws.

Judge's rough justice

An unemployed defendant who could not afford an overnight stay before the start of his trial was reprimanded for his late arrival by a judge who said: "He could have sat on a park bench or waited around at the railway station." James Spence, 31, from Nottingham, who had to travel 150 miles to Gloucester Crown Court for the 10.30am case, angered Judge Hutton by failing to arrive until 1.25pm. The housing charity Shelter said the remark was "amazing".

Bananas

Continued from page 1
I took 70 lb of bananas to give to friends at work and they have made me a badge which says 'The Banana King'.

"The only abusive reaction I had was after giving a bunch of bananas to a woman at her home. As I walked down the garden path her husband shouted 'It's money we want — not bananas'."

Eventually Mr Calcott returned to the supermarket to find that his truck had run out. "They said they were not doing any more bulk orders and would only sell me one case which is quite understandable because they seemed to be making a loss on it."

A spokeswoman for the store said: "It is a very good offer but we have had to limit it to one case per person otherwise we wouldn't have enough bananas for everyone. But I think Mr Calcott made a very nice gesture."

A spokesman for company nationally added: "This is a promotion intended as a special thank you to our club card members."

The supermarket giant would be advised to be on its guard. "It's been great fun and I'd definitely do it again," Mr Calcott said.

"I'm waiting for Tesco to do a special offer on pineapples because I am rather partial to them."

The Tesco Club Card scheme has nine million members who receive vouchers every quarter in order to redeem goods at the stores. Mr Calcott is expecting to receive his vouchers in mid-February and will then have three months to use them up. A spokesman for Tesco added that it was down to individual store managers whether or not they limited the quantities of goods customers purchased as part of the Tesco Club Card offers.

Minister gives hope of a concession for Gurkhas

BY ALICE THOMSON, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Government has bowed to pressure from all sides at Westminster and looks likely to allow Gurkha soldiers to bring their families if they are posted to Britain.

After a barrage of calls in the Lords yesterday for equal treatment for the troops' families, Earl Howe, a junior Defence Minister, said the Government was keen to help the Nepalese servicemen.

Peers pointed out that the 3,000 Gurkhas who will have to leave Hong Kong after the handover to China in the summer were needed in Britain to make up a shortage of manpower. They are to be attached to several units, including the Parachute Regiment. But they do not have British passports and had

been told that their wives could not accompany them to Britain. Peers also complained that the soldiers received only one eighth of the pensions of British servicemen.

Sher Bahadur Deuba, the Nepalese Prime Minister, had asked John Major for a pledge that Britain would allow Gurkhas to bring their families and would raise their pensions.

Lord Howe admitted that accompanied married service was a "legitimate aspiration" for the Brigade of Gurkhas and said that an announcement would be made next month. It is unlikely, however, that their pensions will be raised to the same level as their British counterparts.

Peers accused the Govern-

ment of being "hard-hearted". Viscount Slim, a crossbencher who served as a Gurkha officer, demanded a "pretty quick" resolution of the issue.

Lord Wyatt of Woodford, a crossbencher, said: "Everybody knows what the answer ought to be. Why can't you give it now?"

Lord Williams of Elvel, for Labour, said the Gurkhas "should be treated as an integral part of the British armed forces. This is a matter of urgency."

Lord Howe said there had been a "wide-ranging review" of Gurkha terms and conditions of service. But there were still implications for health-care, education and social security benefits that had to be considered.

Hurd leads jail policy critics

Continued from page 1
mum sentence proposals and the Home Secretary's "prison works" policy which has taken the jail population towards a record 60,000 inmates.

Mr Hurd, architect of an earlier criminal justice measure which put greater emphasis on keeping people out of jail, said that sending more people to prison was a short-term gain for public safety. But, in words that will anger Mr Howard and the Conservative Right, he agrees that prison could turn out to be an expensive way of making bad people worse.

The Prison Reform Trust, founded in 1981, has strongly opposed Mr Howard's law and order initiatives, particu-

larly those affecting sentencing and prisons. Employing six full-time and four part-time staff, it has an annual budget of £250,000 and is funded entirely by charitable donations.

Stephen Shaw, director of the trust, said: "Douglas Hurd's decision to join us is a tremendous boost for the cause of a more effective, more humane and more just penal system during the remainder of the decade."

He said it was a unique decision by a former Home Secretary to join a campaigning charity, particularly one as controversial as the Prison Reform Trust. "His will be a powerful voice arguing for a decent, effective and more

moderate use of imprisonment," Mr Shaw added.

He praised Mr Hurd for being willing to spend some of his time supporting the cause of prison reform. In his job, Mr Hurd will be expected to chair the trust's private and public meetings and lead delegations to see officials and ministers.

His appointment was welcomed last night by other penal reformers. Sir Stephen Tumlin, formerly Chief Inspector of Prisons, said: "Prisons are under the greatest stress and they really need somebody of Douglas Hurd's stature and experience to support their work."

Hurd interview, page 12

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Footballers deny plot to fix matches for cash

By LIN JENKINS

JOHN FASHANU, former footballer and star of *Gladiators*, and Bruce Grobbelaar, one of the best known faces in the English game, appeared in court yesterday accused of involvement in fixing matches. Mr Grobbelaar, the former Liverpool goalkeeper, was said to have collected £40,000 to throw a single match.

He, Mr Fashanu, and Hans Segers, goalkeeper at Mr Fashanu's club, Wimbledon, agreed to take part in match-fixing for a Far Eastern betting syndicate, Winchester Crown Court was told. Their co-accused, Heng Sun Lim, a Malaysian businessman, was said to be acting for the syndicate.

David Calvert-Smith, for the prosecution, told the court that the plot was uncovered in a "sting" operation by reporters from *The Sun* who filmed Mr Grobbelaar allegedly accepting £2,000 from a former business associate.

He said that Mr Fashanu, Wimbledon striker at the time, acted as intermediary, while Mr Grobbelaar and Mr Segers, the two goalkeepers, accepted cash to rig matches by influencing the result.

Mr Fashanu, 33, of St John's Wood, north London; Mr Grobbelaar, 39, of Bramley, Surrey; Mr Segers, 34, of Fleet, Hampshire; and Mr Lim, 30, of Cricklewood, north London, deny conspiring to give and corruptly to accept gifts of money as inducements improperly to influence or attempt to influence the outcome of football matches or as rewards for having done so between February 1991 and November 1994 and, in the



Hans Segers, left, John Fashanu and Bruce Grobbelaar, right, outside Winchester Crown Court yesterday on the opening day of their trial. They are accused of corruption



He said the goalkeeper was the obvious single player to approach to influence the result of a game. However, if the money was given and corruptly received on the understanding that the player would try to influence the result, then it did not matter if the result owed something or nothing to the assistance of the corrupt player.

He said that from 10,000 documents accumulated in evidence, a picture of corruption had emerged. Home and mobile telephone bills had shown Mr Segers and Mr Lim first began calling one another in August 1992 and Mr Grobbelaar and Mr Lim in November that year.

A snapshot of the bills on a day Wimbledon lost to Ipswich showed Mr Lim ringing a Mr Josef in Indonesia and then telephoning Mr Fashanu and Mr Segers, sometimes calling a telephone in the name of Buckle which Mr Fashanu used; he also held a bank account in that name. The calls would be back-to-back in quick succession, Mr Calvert-Smith said. "The Crown suggests that they give rise to a strong inference that the motive for the calls was the same."

He said that Mr Segers, who earned £80,000 a year, deposited large sums in a Swiss bank account, particularly after Wimbledon had lost matches. "These were not his salary or bonuses or lawfully obtained."

He had told police that it was the proceeds of crime in his youth. "The story of how he came by all this cash is implausible in the extreme," Mr Calvert-Smith said. The case continues.

case of Mr Grobbelaar, between November 1992 and November 1994.

Mr Calvert-Smith said that Mr Grobbelaar, who was born in Zimbabwe and has been capped eight times for his country, had become embittered when his £160,000-a-year salary, earned at the height of his career at Liverpool, began to fall below that of younger players. He then became involved with the Indonesia-based syndicate after he was lured by the offer of a £40,000 to £60,000 payout to throw one match. The prosecution said that the syndicate aimed to rig a Liverpool

versus Newcastle game in November, 1993, which the northeast club won 3-0.

Mr Calvert-Smith told the jury that all three footballers accepted money "to influence the results of games in order that the syndicate setting up this corrupt scheme could bet on the results, and if not the result, the goal difference."

The evidence of Mr Grobbelaar's former business partner, Christopher Vincent, a fellow Zimbabwean, is expected to form the central plank of the case against him in a trial that could last up to two months.

Mr Calvert-Smith said that

Mr Vincent had told *The Sun* that Mr Grobbelaar had thrown matches for money from Mr Lim. Mr Vincent had recounted how on one occasion Mr Grobbelaar had flown to London to pick up £40,000 from Mr Fashanu. It was the largest single payment uncovered by police.

Mr Vincent had said that Mr Grobbelaar had told him in advance that he was going to "do the business this weekend" and when Liverpool lost 3-0 away to Newcastle in November, 1993. He had telephoned him and described it as a "good result".

Four days later, Mr Vincent

and Mr Grobbelaar had flown to Heathrow and driven a hire car to Mr Fashanu's office in London. They had been sent to the house of a friend of Mr Fashanu's in Finchley, north London, which Mr Fashanu was using, and had picked up £40,000 in cash.

Mr Grobbelaar had given £20,000 to Mr Vincent for their safari holiday company, Mondoro Wildlife Corp Ltd, and put £5,000 into his testimonial fund. A model booked to do some promotional pictures for the company was paid £500 cash, even though no photographs were taken.

"The Crown is entitled to ask

where did he get the money?" Mr Calvert-Smith said.

Mr Vincent had also said that Mr Grobbelaar had his own secret code and would refer to a win as "a Wimbledon", a draw as "a Dundee" and a loss as "a Leeds".

Mr Calvert-Smith said that in *The Sun* newspaper sting, Mr Grobbelaar had accepted £2,000 from a fictitious betting syndicate which promised him £100,000 if the result of a particular match went the right way. As a result, police had begun an investigation and uncovered systematic corruption over 3½ years.

Mr Calvert-Smith said

some people would ask how it was possible for a single player to fix a match. "He may never have any opportunity to do so. His teammates or the opposition may frustrate him. Indeed, the Crown says that happened in January 1994 with Liverpool versus Manchester United. There is, of course, a limit to what people can do in front of 40 or 50,000 people and a television audience of millions which is not clear and obvious. You could not just let the ball roll between your legs. But goalkeepers do sometimes make mistakes, so the odd mistake can slip through."

HANS SEGERS was born in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, and joined Wimbledon as a goalkeeper in the same year as Mr Fashanu. His average annual income with the club had been £80,000. He began his career with PSV Eindhoven and played in the same Dutch under-18 side as Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea manager. He joined Wimbledon from Nottingham Forest for a transfer fee of £125,000. Last summer he signed for Wolverhampton Wanderers.

JOHN FASHANU was a striker for Wimbledon Football Club from 1986 to August 1994. He played more than 300 games for the team, known as the Crazy Gang, scoring 129 goals and collecting an FA Cup winner's medal in 1988. His salary averaged £200,000. He transferred to Aston Villa in the month that Mr Grobbelaar went to Southampton, and received a signing-on fee of £200,000 in the £1.35 million move. Injury ended his career in 1995.

BRUCE GROBBELAAR was idolised by Liverpool fans during a career that spanned 500 first-team games. He won six League titles with the club, as well as three winners' medals for the FA and League Cups. The Zimbabwe-born goalkeeper was employed by Liverpool from 1981 to 1994 and his salary for the last four years was about £160,000. He transferred to Southampton and played more than 30 games before moving to his present club, Plymouth Argyle.

Partisan jurors weeded out before the case kicks off

By LIN JENKINS

POTENTIAL jurors in the match-fixing case were asked whether they supported a football team before they were selected. One man who admitted to being a Liverpool supporter was quickly substituted for someone without strong affiliations.

The judge, Mr Justice Tuckey, said that employees of *The Sun* or committed fans of Liverpool, Southampton or Wimbledon would not be considered eligible.

When one man claimed he might not be able to last the trial because of a holiday booked for April, the judge quipped: "We'll take a bet on you. Sorry, we won't take a bet

on you," as counsel and the footballers laughed.

Other potential jurors were excused because they had young children at home, had to care for ill relatives or ran a family business that could not do without them for the estimated eight weeks of the trial.

As he opened the prosecution case, David Calvert-Smith complained that he felt as if he were "more in the dogout than on the pitch". He craned his neck to see over the vast rows of box files containing copies of the 10,000 documents in the case and the judge agreed to break with convention and allow him and other barristers to move to the second row bench

where they were more visible.

John Fashanu, Bruce Grobbelaar, and Hans Segers, all smartly dressed in Italian suits, chatted with court staff and signed autographs for them in the lunch adjournment. Mr Fashanu, much to his own amusement, even agreed to go back outside the court for press photographers who had failed to get a shot of him and his wife, Melissa Cassa-Mapsi, when they arrived.

His wife joined Debbie Grobbelaar and Astrid Segers in the public gallery where the numbers were swelled by reporters. Proceedings are being relayed by speaker into another court for the overspill.

Knife killer snooped on ex-girlfriend

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A DOCTOR'S daughter and her boyfriend were stabbed to death by her spurned lover after he secretly recorded them in a bedroom, a court was told yesterday.

Fiona Ovis, 28, and William Crompton, 18, were stabbed repeatedly by Andrew Cole, who broke into her bungalow when he listened via a microphone through the letterbox.

Chester Crown Court was told that, afterwards, he cycled to a hospital where he produced a bloodstained knife, saying: "I murdered her."

Cole, 26, of Llandrindod Wells, Powys, has admitted killing the couple last May but denies murder on the grounds of diminished responsibility and provocation.

The jury was told that Cole had had a relationship for several months with Miss Ovis, the daughter of a GP, Lord Thomas of Gresford, QC, for the prosecution, said that, the week before the killings, Cole had been sedated in hospital for four days because of his distress at her new relationship.

Thirty-six hours after his release, he put a microphone from a tape recorder through her letterbox, Cole told police. "I played it back and heard music and moans and groans. I just flipped."

The trial continues.

Prostitute 'gave taxman solace'

By TIM JONES

A SENIOR tax investigator broke down in the witness box in the Old Bailey as he described how family and work worries drove him into the arms of a prostitute.

Michael Allcock, 47, told a jury that he had begun an affair with Michelle Corrigan, 30, when his wife had been recovering from cancer. Mr Allcock, from Colchester, Essex, who denies 11 charges of corruption, said that because of his wife's illness the mood at home was very bleak. "We had some dark times. We were both frightened."

He told the court that he had first met Miss Corrigan through Hishan Alwan, one of the businessmen who was being investigated by the office

of the Inland Revenue where he worked as a group leader.

The Iraqi-born oil consultant was, he said, one of the few men he could talk to about his problems. "I asked him if he could give me a name of someone who I could have a night out with to forget my problems," Mr Alwan, he said, had put him in touch with Miss Corrigan.

Mr Allcock and Miss Corrigan had gone to bed together. Mr Allcock said that Mr Alwan then told him he had paid Miss Corrigan between £200 and £250. "I paid him in cash. Nothing more was said."


Eventually, Mr Allcock developed an emotional attachment to Miss Corrigan. "We became kindred spirits," Miss Corrigan was, like himself, "emotionally damaged" and they "needed each other."

Questioned by Anthony Arlidge, QC, for the defence, Mr Allcock agreed that he had bought expensive clothes for her. "I wanted to change her from a bimbo to something more elegant," he said. Some of the money that he had used to buy expensive cars had come from his wife's relatives.

Mr Allcock totally rejected the suggestion that he had been given money by taxpayers. Mr Alwan, 54, denies three charges of corruption. The case continues.



Allcock was concerned over his wife's illness




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Catholic schools widen their net to fill places

By Ruth Gledhill and John O'Leary

ROMAN Catholic independent schools are turning increasingly to pupils from other Churches to fill places, as growing numbers of wealthy Catholics send their children to rival public schools.

Children from other Churches are now in the majority at four out of ten Catholic independent schools, according to a survey published today. It says that the "dilution of the Catholic nature of our schools" is continuing, with only one school refusing to accept non-Catholic children.

Half of the 100 schools surveyed had increased pupil rolls over the past five years, although nearly a fifth had declined by more than 10 per cent. The research, by the Catholic Independent Schools Conference, also shows that a quarter were unable to fill all their places. Only 46 per cent had more applicants than places.

The survey highlights the trend towards fewer monks or nuns on the staff of such schools. Nearly half had no

A grammar school has introduced its own selection examination, more demanding than the 11-plus, in response to a council pledge to phase-out selection. More than 560 boys who have already passed the 11-plus will sit the examination this weekend in an effort to gain one of 150 places at Altrincham Grammar School. The grant-maintained school has taken the action to thwart Labour-controlled Trafford Borough Council, which has promised to phase out the 11-plus if the party wins the general election. Bryan Purvis, the head, said parents were keen to preserve selection.

"religious" on the staff, compared with 35 per cent a year ago. More than half reported difficulty recruiting staff with the right religious and academic qualifications.

The survey has been published shortly after some of the leading independent Catholic schools pleaded for greater support from parents and bishops as increasing numbers of parents send their children to other public schools. For example, Eton, which appointed a Catholic chaplain in the early 1980s, now has nearly 150 Catholic boys, compared with a handful 20 years ago.

Two Catholic independent schools, Buckfast Abbey preparatory school in Devon and Belmont Abbey near Here-

ford, have closed recently. However, compared with the independent sector as a whole, Catholic schools are doing well, because of the strong demand from non-Catholics for a moral education. Last year, independent schools of all types recorded their first rise in pupil numbers since 1991. Over the five-year period, numbers are still down.

Father Antony Such, Head Master of Downside, near Bath, where numbers have fallen by a third in 20 years, said that he accepted non-Catholics only under exceptional circumstances. "In England I feel it is important for Catholics to be brought up in a Catholic culture," he said. "They need to understand it before facing atheism and the

multitude of religions that are around."

Father Leo Chamberlain, Head Master of Ampleforth College, where the junior school has ten more boys than last year, said: "Other Christians are seeing in Catholic schools positive things that they very much want."

He acknowledged that there had been recent closures of independent schools. "But I have no reason to suggest that Catholic schools have suffered more than others."

Dermot Gogarty, Headmaster of St John's, in Windsor, said: "Over the past five years, the sector has grown in confidence and certainty about the future. The challenge that now faces us is to show some Catholic parents the dangers of being seduced purely by academic league tables in the mistaken belief that this alone will lead to a happy and successful life."

He added: "What is disappointing is that some Catholic parents are choosing non-Catholic schools, thus denying their children the opportunity of growing in a strong, committed and focused Catholic Christian community."

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The vulnerability of hedgehogs to traffic is expected to draw children's attention to their own road safety

Hedgehogs set safety example to children

By Jonathan Prynn
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE hedgehog, whose vulnerability to traffic is well known, yesterday became the latest animal to promote road safety to children.

Two cartoon hedgehogs lead a £500,000 five-week campaign launched by John Bowis, the Road Safety Minister. "Hedgehogs are not renowned for their road sense, and we feel this unusual approach will have great appeal to children," he said.

A 30-second cartoon depicts two hedgehogs looking for a safe place to cross. The smaller hedgehog asks: "Now?", to which the larger hedgehog replies: "No, not now," as a car rushes past. Eventually they find a safe place and walk across. The use of animals began with Tuffy the squirrel in 1961, developed into Squawk the parrot in the early 1970s, and gave rise recently to Watchit, a dragon character.

Essex and Cheshire county councils said they would not use the campaign because its "twice" images would make no impression.

SATURDAY
IN THE TIMES



GIRLZONE

Alan Jackson on rock's female revolution in the Magazine

FRENCH LEAVE

Four-page travel special on Britain's favourite holiday destination in Weekend

Plus

THE DIRECTORY, CAR 97, WEEKEND MONEY and 1015 for young readers

After-class clubs 'help to improve exam results'

By John O'Leary, Education Editor

EXTRA-CURRICULAR activities are as likely to boost a school's examination performance as the amount of homework pupils are set, government-sponsored research suggested yesterday.

Robin Squire, the Education Minister, announced a £60,000 programme to promote after-class initiatives in 12 schools. He said that a study at London and Keele universities provided "concrete evidence" that homework helped to improve pupils' results. But the author of the report said that activities such as music and drama, sports, and societies appeared to be equally important. A comparison of seven outstanding schools with seven considered average showed consistent differences in such "curriculum enrichment", as well as in the amount of homework set.

Professor Michael Barber, the Dean of New Initiatives at the London University Institute of Education, said that a causal relationship could not be demonstrated, but that the best schools valued both homework and extra-curricular activities. Schools did not have to choose between academic excellence and a rounded education.

Professor Barber said:

"Schools that are setting more homework are also the ones where there are higher levels of participation in extra-curricular education. In both cases, pupils are spending more time productively occupied and less time watching *Neighbours* or hanging around street corners."

Mr Squire accused Labour of "insulting" teachers by insisting that they give half an hour of homework a night in primary schools and an hour and a half for secondary pupils. He said the Government would give schools the information they needed to set their own policies. "We don't disagree with Labour on the importance of homework and out-of-school activities. Where we disagree is on the practicality of seeking to establish how much homework is carried out in every form."

Teaching union leaders backed the Government's stance. Nigel de Gruchy, of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, said: "The Government's approach will commend itself more to the profession than the dictatorial we know best approach from Tony Blair."

But Labour said there was evidence that parents wanted guidelines set for homework.

Simply the Best.

THE TIMES DILLONS FORUM

Anne Frank evening

with Janet Suzman, Terry Waite and Joely Richardson

TO CELEBRATE the publication of the definitive edition of Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*, readers of *The Times* are invited to an evening of readings and discussion on Wednesday, February 5, at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1 at 7.30pm.

Janet Suzman, Joely Richardson and Terry Waite will read from this unabridged edition of the diary, and Buddy Elias, Anne's only surviving cousin, will discuss the enduring appeal of the diary and his memories of Anne. There will also be excerpts from Jon Blair's Oscar-winning documentary *Anne Frank Remembered*, and an opportunity for the audience to question the panel.

■ Tickets for the forum at £10 (concessions for OAPs, students and the unemployed at £7.50 on production of appropriate identification), which includes £2 off the price of *The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank, the Definitive Edition* (Viking, £16), are available by phoning 0171-467 1613, by faxing the coupon below to 0171-467 1690, or by sending the coupon, with your remittance, to Dillons, 82 Gower Street, London WC1E 6BQ, where tickets can also be bought in person. A percentage of the ticket price will be donated to the Anne Frank Educational Trust.

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Ban sought on unlicensed breeders

MP launches Bill to stamp out 'vile' trade in puppies

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
AGRICULTURE
CORRESPONDENT

DRAFT legislation to end the trade in dogs bred on unlicensed puppy farms was launched yesterday with the support of MPs from all parties and leading animal welfare and veterinary bodies.

The Kennel Club, the guardian of pedigree standards, and more than 80 local authorities are also backing the Private Member's Bill, which is due for its second reading in the Commons on Friday.

Diana Maddock, the Liberal Democrat MP for Christchurch, is the sponsor of the *Breeding and Sale of Dogs Bill*. She said: "We want to stamp out unlicensed premises where puppies are reared in appalling conditions. The Bill would give local authorities and the RSPCA the teeth to do something about it."

Roger Gale, chairman of the Commons all-party group on animal welfare, said the draft incorporated many of the recommendations it had put forward in a report on puppy breeding in June last year. "It is a vile trade. It is rotten," the Tory MP for North Thanet said. "Members of the public effectively support this trade by buying from shops who



Maddock: wants to give authorities "more teeth"

buy cheaply from middlemen without knowing where the animals come from. They are buying huge vet bills for the future as most of these animals have inherent diseases."

The chances of the Bill becoming law are slight because of lack of parliamentary time. It would need only one MP to object to it for it to be sent to the back of the queue and effectively killed.

"The Government is still considering its position," a Home Office spokesman said. "Existing laws give local authorities quite wide-ranging powers and it may be that they

should be encouraged to make more use of these."

Unlicensed puppy farms are estimated to run into the hundreds, most of them in Wales, and rear up to 70,000 animals a year. Potential profits are huge, with a single litter able to fetch £3,000 or more. Kate Parmenter, head of press affairs at the RSPCA, which helped to draw up the Bill, said: "Bitches are relentlessly bred to produce puppies for sale in conditions that are often dark, cramped and filthy. It is difficult under the existing law to inspect or prosecute such premises."

Under the draft Bill, inspection by an independent vet would be required before any breeding establishment could be licensed. Any premises with two or more bitches and selling puppies from three or more litters a year would be covered. Small-time breeders would be exempt.

The Bill would also make it illegal for retailers to sell puppies obtained from unlicensed breeders, make it easier for local councils to prosecute such breeders, and provide for the introduction of strict welfare standards.

Pet shop owners would be required to keep a record of the name and address of the person from whom each dog kept for sale had been acquired and to produce the documents for vets or local authority officials. Failure to do so could lead to a fine of £500 or three months imprisonment, or both.

Under the existing law, according to the Bill's supporters, there are virtually no welfare standards for dog breeders. Local authorities also often have difficulty in proving that dogs are being bred for sale and in gaining entry to private premises to investigate possible offences.

The RSPCA said yesterday that dog buyers should always visit the breeding premises and check the conditions for themselves. Ms Parmenter said: "The acid test is whether the puppy is being reared alongside its mother."



Les Murray, who disliked poetry until inspired by good teaching when he was 18

Poet to spend £5,000 prize on eye operation for wife

By DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE Australian winner of the 1996 T.S. Eliot poetry prize said yesterday that he was planning to spend his £5,000 award on a laser operation to improve his wife's sight.

Les Murray, whose *Subhuman Redneck Poems* beat off competition from the Nobel winner Seamus Heaney, said that the win would enable his wife, whose salary as a teacher had long supported both of them, to have her cornea reshaped, correcting short sight.

Murray, 58, grew up on a farm and says that he loathed poetry until he was 18. He has since won every Australian poetry prize. The poet Ruth Padel, one of the Eliot prize judges, said: "His writing has a wonderful poetic electricity that runs through the words. Cleverness is never put at the service of technique but of

feeling." He had long desired to be better known in this country, she added.

The poet, who did not attend the London prize-giving, said from his home in New South Wales that it was "nice to win" but felt it was sad that competitors threw up "a whole lot of losers... It's a pity we have to eat each other for our sustenance." He had refused to go to the ceremony unless he was told who had won, but the organisers refused. "A writer shouldn't have to eat his fingernails while watching to see who'll be humiliated."

He recalled his early dislike of poetry: "It was a school subject and I was deeply suspicious of it. But at 18, I was completely converted by two good teachers. It was

modern Australian poetry that made me realise it had relevance."

From there, he was led on to Eliot, Gerard Manley Hopkins and earlier poets who had previously seemed "artificial". "I was absolutely wowed. The tension, the enormous life in the writing. It was like striking a spring made out of language." After 40 years of writing, Murray describes poetry as composing "with your ears and feet—a sense of dancing and measuring of breath."

Although describing his sales in Australia as "fairly healthy" by poetry standards, he said it had been hard to make a living. "We've spent our lives budgeting. The income is close to the knuckle. But we get by."

Surgery brings a brighter prospect

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A COUPLE are enjoying a new outlook on life after having the same eye operation on the same day to restore their sight. Stuart and Babette Ingram, married for 40 years, had despair when their vision degenerated to the extent that they could see only in blurred outline.

After having pioneering eye surgery within an hour of each other, they can now see clearly. "It is like seeing everything again for the first time, but what makes it so magic is that we are seeing it together," Mr Ingram, 63, said. "We had forgotten what a colourful and beautiful place the world was. We have always been a very close couple but this shared experience has brought us a lot closer."

Mr and Mrs Ingram, of Dudley in the West Midlands, had both worn strong glasses for ten years. The new glasses they kept needing were "costing a fortune", and they were finding pastimes such as gardening and golf increasingly difficult. It became impossible for them to sail their boat.

The surgery entails a powerful plastic lens being inserted into each eye, so that it replaces the natural lens and corrects the vision. The operations were performed by Emanuel Rosen at the private Centre for Advanced Refractive Eye Surgery, at Alexandra Hospital in Cheadle, Greater Manchester, last month. "This is the first time I have operated on a husband and wife for the same problem on the same day. The results have

'Insensitive' Dunblane massacre survey withdrawn

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH
SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

ACADEMICS have caused outrage in Dunblane by sending questionnaires to people in an attempt to study the effect on the community of the murders of 16 schoolchildren and their teacher last March.

Public health and Stirling council officials have said the research was insensitive and inappropriate after a relative of one of the victims received a questionnaire and complained to the council's support centre in Dunblane.

Five hundred questionnaires were sent earlier this month, half to Dunblane residents and the rest to people in nearby Stirling. The addresses were picked at random from the telephone book. They arrived with a cover note from Dr Man Cheung Chung, of Wolverhampton University, and Dr Peter Nolan, of Birmingham University, asking for them to be completed and returned by next Friday.

The questionnaire had multiple choice questions asking residents how often they thought about the massacre and if they feared for their safety. The researchers did not contact Forth Valley Health Board or Stirling council, and the study was not submitted to the health board's ethics committee.

Dr Mick North, a reader in biochemistry at Stirling University whose daughter Sophie, 5, died in the massacre, said: "It does seem particularly insensitive to send questionnaires directly to people."

Neither Dr Chung nor Dr Nolan was available for comment yesterday. Wolverhampton University said: "Both researchers are very upset about the distress they have caused. Both have track records in the area of post-traumatic stress disorder. In this instance they were naive and it has been a learning experience for them."

A letter of apology has been sent to recipients of the questionnaire. John White, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Wolverhampton University, said: "We very deeply regret any distress this letter may have caused. With hindsight, the researchers acknowledge that their initial methods of approach could have been more sensitive and the university decided last week to withdraw the project."

Professor Maxwell Irvine, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Birmingham University, said: "I deeply regret the distress which has been caused to the people of Dunblane. The letter is insensitive and reveals a lack of sound judgment. It was not seen by any member of this university."

Tax rebel sentenced to 21 days in prison

A 69-year-old man has been sentenced to 21 days' imprisonment after repeatedly refusing to pay almost £7,000 in outstanding tax to the Inland Revenue. Roger Franklin, of Horsley, Gloucestershire, who is protesting at arms spending, ignored county court summonses.

Franklin was given a 28-day sentence in 1995 over unpaid capital gains tax on investment income. He served 12 days before the tax demand was waived. The Revenue then took further legal action to recover the rest of his debt.

Drink-drive PC

A police officer who crashed his car into a wall while three times over the drink-drive limit was jailed for six weeks. PC Kevin Coombes, 30, of Ward End, Birmingham, who served with West Midlands Police, had been at a Christmas party at a police station.

Solicitor arrested

A solicitor has been arrested in Thailand for alleged fraud involving £18 million in mortgage funds. Robert Akin, 46, from Luton, fled Britain in 1992 after a fraud squad inquiry into his conveyancing work. British police are seeking his extradition.

Strip club halted

The clubowner Peter Stringfellow has withdrawn an application to open a "lap dancing" club in Manchester, blaming market forces. The proposal, for the site of the former Millionaire Club, had been opposed by women's groups.

Fatal flea drops

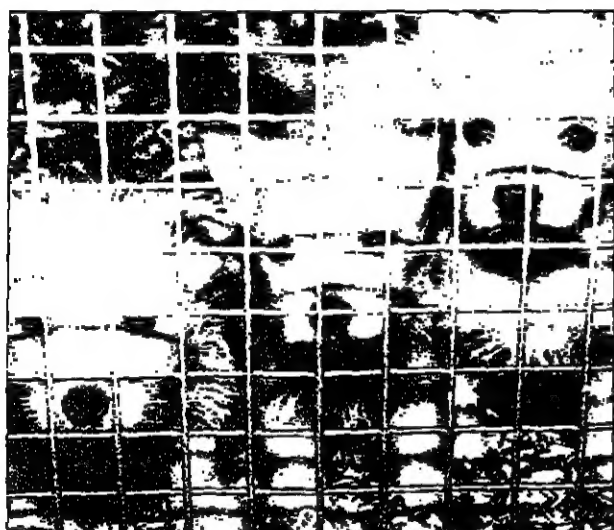
Twenty cats and a dog may have been killed by a toxic batch of flea drops. Virbac has recalled batches 21 to 42 of its Droxip Cat solution and batches 17 to 27 of Droxip Dog. Jean Baker, 46, of Southampton, said her cat, Alice, died hours after she applied it.

Cold feat

Robert Garside, who is attempting to run round the world by 2000, arrived in Vienna yesterday "a bit late" because of the extreme cold in France. Mr Garside, 30, left London on December 7 and expects to return on New Year's Eve, 1999.

Red card for ref

A football referee has been banned for 28 days after admitting bringing the game into disrepute by swearing at a player. John Coleman, 35, of Portsmouth, swore at a Colden Common defender who disputed a throw-in during a Hampshire Cup match.



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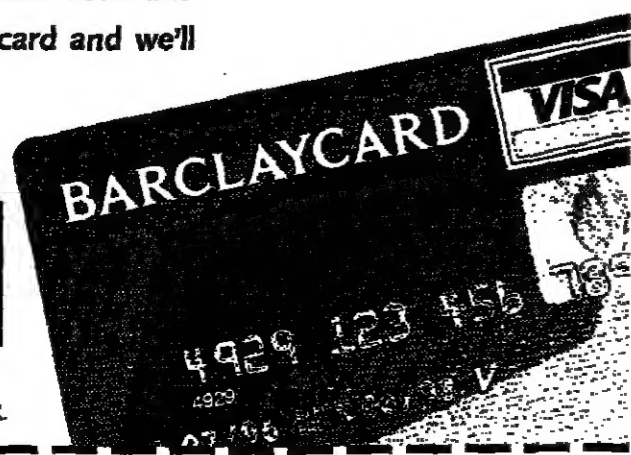
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Major tells 'abusive' Blair to look in the mirror

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

JOHN MAJOR set the scene for a bitter personal election campaign against Tony Blair yesterday by declaring his claim to be a stronger leader. He told Mr Blair to "look in the mirror" before making accusations of weak leadership.

Alleging that Mr Blair was copying his policies and indulging in the "politics of insults", Mr Major declared that he "was raring to go" for an election campaign that he again indicated was likely to end on May 1.

Mr Major, returning from a six-day tour of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, eagerly sought to take the initiative with some of his most contemptuous remarks about Mr Blair and Labour and their alleged failure to spell out policies.

He challenged Mr Blair and Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, over the proposed windfall tax on privatised utilities, telling them to publish the advice on which they claimed it was not illegal. He said they continued to postpone giving details of their tax plans, and now the centrepiece of the windfall tax — "a wonderful golden money tree that hangs at the bottom of a

prospective Labour Chancellor's garden" — might be illegal.

"This is just farcical and ludicrous," he said. "They are patently not ready to face an election campaign."

Mr Major gave a press conference during his flight home to set out the main themes of his election attack on Labour. He also hardened his position for the European inter-governmental conference, having suggested on Sunday that his vision of a flexible Europe was the only way forward and that he would veto any alternative favoured by the federalists and centralists.

In an ITN interview earlier Mr Major confirmed previous clear indications that he favoured calling the election for May 1. "I am prepared to play it long, yes, of course I am prepared to play it long," he said.

There was "every good reason" for allowing the current Parliament to flow a little longer because he wanted to get through the education and law and order reforms and the tax cuts announced in the Budget.

But his message was that he was relishing the fight ahead

and it appears that he is hoping that he can avoid a Commons defeat on a key issue to keep the campaign going as long as possible. Strategists say that he will regard the launch of the Wirral South by-election campaign shortly as the start of electioneering proper, hoping that he will get through a three-month campaign.

He told reporters: "We are getting close to an election. I like elections. I am raring to go when we get back to the domestic scene."

Mr Major has been clearly stung by Mr Blair's attack on his leadership, Mr Blair, he said, did not want to talk about policies so he had gone for the politics of insults. Yet after accusing him of weakness over Europe, Mr Blair had adopted exactly the same position as he had over the single currency.

"Perhaps he should look in the mirror before he advances charges like that. When they do not want to talk about policy they wheel out Tony Blair, John Prescott and Brian Wilson to abuse. That will not wash with the electorate."

Mr Major is so far behind in the polls that many in his party speak privately of hop-

ing only to limit the scale of the defeat. But on his popular progress through the Indian sub-continent, which has produced the prospect of substantial fresh orders for British business, he has behaved anything but like a man thinking of failure.

This past week it has been the old relaxed Mr Major on view. The newspapers have not been his favourite friends in recent Euro-troubled years, and press relations on overseas trips have sometimes been cool. He has never been less than courteous. But this time a charm offensive has been evident.

During the two-stage trip from Dhaka to Islamabad, via Delhi, last Sunday he spent most of the first flight chatting to every member of the press corps then gave an on-the-record news conference before landing in Pakistan. He has been in a very good mood. There has been plenty of laughing.

On the Khyber he was clearly tickled by the story of how the Afghan freedom fighters had rolled a group of Russian invaders down a hill. When it was suggested that that might be the answer for some of his troublesome back-



benchers, he smiled and declared: "Now, now!"

Mr Major's apparent contentment probably springs from his being into the home straight. One way or another his years of turmoil may be

coming to an end. If he wins against all the odds, he will be the greatest Tory Houdini of all time and his position immeasurably strengthened: if he loses he will be off, probably quite quickly.

Trivial tax game is no way to pursue progress

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

The pre-election debate about tax is woefully inadequate. It focuses almost entirely on the basic and higher rates of income tax and tendentious arguments about the share of income that people pay in tax. Labour is so defensive, and the Tories so one-sided, that the real options are not discussed.

The key influences are not small variations in marginal rates of income tax but the state of the economy and the level of public spending. The Government has had more success in reducing the relative size of the public sector than its right-wing critics concede. Nevertheless, as the Treasury committee accepts yesterday in its report on the 1996 Budget, "getting public expenditure below 40 per cent and holding it there for a period of years has been achieved on very few occasions in the past 30 years".

The committee asks "whether the Government's objective is achievable in the short to medium term without a more thoroughgoing and wholesale reappraisal of the role of the state and the extent to which it can or should provide various services". But neither of the main parties is willing to discuss the implications and the Liberal Democrats' answer of top income tax for schools only skirts the issue.

Since income tax accounts for only a quarter of Government revenue, what matters is the overall tax structure. In the Thatcher years, Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson did much to reform the tax system, shifting from direct to indirect tax and simplifying both income and corporation tax. Norman Lamont and Kenneth Clarke have been more concerned with re-establishing control over public finances. Their main innovations have been the new system of spending control and greater openness in monetary policy.

By temperament, Mr Clarke has been less interested in tax reform or simplification. Indeed, he has reversed some of the Lawson legacy, not only by introducing new taxes but also by making the system more complicated with more rates of tax.

The phasing out of mortgage tax relief and the married

man's allowance initiated by Mr Lamont has been hailed. Indeed there has been a campaign, backed by Tory populists and their press allies, to rebuild these tax reliefs in the name of family values and the homebuyer. At the same time, the controversy over the extension of VAT to domestic fuel has discouraged both parties from considering any further expansion of the VAT base.

The present position is unsatisfactory. The tax system has become more, not less, complicated during the 1990s, while the tax base has been squeezed, leading to the recent shortfall in tax receipts which pushed up public borrowing. Any new government should consider a programme of tax reform involving a simplification of income tax, balancing a single or at most two rates, with the elimination of the 30 current forms of relief, an extension of VAT to all forms of consumption, with essentials taxed at 8 per cent; and a cut in tax on savings.

The case for such changes was recently put by Nigel Forman, one of the most thoughtful Tory backbenchers. In a recent *Demos* pamphlet, *Single Rate Tax: The Path to Real Simplicity*, he argues that these changes would benefit most taxpayers, stimulate growth, reduce avoidance, make the tax system more buoyant and remove many of the present distortions.

That, as Mr Forman admits, would require real political courage from the Chancellor who embarked upon it. Instead, both main parties are now busily limiting their future freedom of manoeuvre. There are obvious electoral reasons why Labour claims that nothing in its plans implies an increase in personal taxation. But Gordon Brown may regret the day he ruled out any extension of VAT. Demanding every detail of tax rates is a trivial and dishonest game compared with the real issues of tax and public spending.

PETER RIDDELL

Gummer attacks 'hypocrites'

By Nick Nuttall

INTERNATIONAL efforts to protect the environment are degenerating into a shambles because of penny-pinching by nations including Canada, America and France, John Gummer claimed yesterday.

The Environment Secretary accused several countries of robbing the United Nations

Environment Programme of the political and financial clout needed to succeed. He said their latest actions had severely damaged the worldwide campaign to prevent pollution from harming fish stocks and wildlife.

Mr Gummer, speaking at a Foreign Office meeting on the oceans, said: "Britain is punching well above its

weight in what we spend but many of our neighbours in Europe and North America have reduced what they spend." He said Canada was especially hypocritical for cutting its contributions by two thirds. "This is despite there being no country in the world that witters on about the environment so internationally and so perpetually."

Peers ready to fight gun curbs

By James Landale

PRO-SHOOTING members of the Lords will tomorrow try to force radical changes to the Government's new gun control laws.

The peers are keen to alter the Firearms (Amendment) Bill to minimise the damaging impact they believe it will have on shooting enthusiasts.

The legislation, which was introduced in response to the Dunblane massacre, would ban all handguns over .22 calibre and tighten up security at shooting clubs.

The Government's opponents have tabled many amendments to the Bill, which comes up for its detailed committee stage consideration on Thursday. But

Whitehall and Lords sources said that they were relaxed and expected the Government to make few concessions.

One of the demands is for greater compensation, which at present is to be available only to gun owners who are forced to hand in weapons and ammunition. Lord Swansea has tabled an amendment that would provide compensation for the owners of shooting clubs that go out of business, including cover for liabilities such as mortgages and leases. This could raise the Government's compensation bill from £150 million to almost £1 billion.

The peers also want to scrap plans for stringent new security controls on gun clubs. Instead, Lord Swansea has tabled an amendment allowing gun owners to disassemble their weapons so that one part is kept at home and the rest at a shooting club. This would cut security costs that would otherwise put many clubs out of business.

Another amendment would exempt the national pistol shooting squad from the ban on storing handguns at home.

IN PARLIAMENT

TODAY: In the Commons: 9.30am, backbench debates. From 2.30pm, Foreign Office questions: Crime and Punishment (Scotland) Bill, remaining stages; debate on control of firearms. In the Lords: Housing debate; Sunday Closing and Licensing Bill, second reading.

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Poll commissars award Belgrade to opposition

FROM ANTHONY LOYD IN BELGRADE

EMBATTLED in a power struggle within his own Socialist Government in Serbia, President Milosevic's crumbling fortunes appeared further threatened yesterday when a Belgrade electoral commission recognised the opposition coalition parties had won control of the capital's vital city assembly in November's poll.

Hours later, in a second announcement, the commission also fully restored an opposition victory in Serbia's second largest city, Nis.

However, its sudden moves were met with suspicion by coalition leaders who questioned its authority, labelled the decisions a ploy and vowed to continue the mass protests that have gripped Serbia since Mr Milosevic's rescinding of local election results eight weeks ago.

"The Socialists have given us a new year's present we don't believe in," said Zoran Djindjic, leader of the Democratic Party and a principal force among the Zajedno coalition triumvirate. "We want full acceptance of all the original election results. Until then there will be no trade."

Vuk Draskovic, leader of the coalition, appeared equally wary. He asked: "Is this a real decision, or a new trick to ambush the Serbian people and international community, and buy Milosevic the time he needs? We must wait and see how the Socialists react to this before we can believe in it."

Either way, the commission's announcement is a victory for the opposition, enhancing the credibility of its demands while highlighting the disarray of Mr Milosevic's political forces. Its decision was made public at a news conference. "Today we decided to annul 45 rulings of the district court," said Radomir Lazarevic, the commission head. "This means we have practically restored the situation with the results as found on November 17."

Those results bring control of the capital's powerful city assembly, which presides over 20 per cent of Serbia's population and crucial media and legal bodies. Yesterday, the commission's decision awarded 60 seats to the opposition coalition and 23 to the incumbent Socialist bloc among the 110 seats contested. Mr Lazarevic said that the commission would come to a decision about ten other seats within three days.

However, there was good reason to doubt the Government's apparent climbdown. Belgrade's election commission had its power to recognise the results annulled in November when President Milosevic decided that judges

at district and municipal level and, ultimately, the supreme court should decide who had won. The commission qualified its latest announcement by saying the "preliminary" decision could be challenged by the Socialists.

President Milosevic is renowned for his "cat and mouse" skills. There is real concern among the opposition that this latest announcement is an attempt by him to dupe most protesters into leaving the streets before he smashes the remnants with force.

However, there is no doubt that the President is being forced to feel the political wind of change. The demonstration-cum-party on Monday night, the Orthodox Christian New Year's Eve, in central Belgrade was attended by perhaps half a million people. The wildest rally yet, with scenes of defiant revelry, were broadcast globally.

Yet it could have been the suburbs to which Mr Milosevic tuned his ear. There, away from television cameras and watchful police in Republic Square, long, chattering bursts of "happy fire" from heavy machineguns and assault rifles could be heard in support of the demonstrators. This is a land where the people are armed.

Leading article, page 17



Children sent to India by Saudi Arabia line up at Bombay airport before being taken to a remand home yesterday

Saudia Arabia deports 76 girls to India

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

SEVENTY-SIX girls, some as young as six and many physically or mentally disabled, arrived in India on a flight from Saudi Arabia, leaving the authorities in Bombay perplexed yesterday.

Preliminary inquiries by police and social workers indicated that the girls, aged between six and 15, had been abandoned by their parents after being taken to Saudi Arabia from India or Bangladesh, and were deported late on

Monday after being given travel documents by the Saudi authorities. Police suspect that the girls had been taken to work as prostitutes. Charan Singh Azad, Bombay's joint police commissioner, said the girls may have been taken on the pretext of making a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.

One girl told social workers her arm had been amputated in Saudi Arabia, but did not explain why. Others were crippled by polio or had burn scars on their bodies. Poor Indian parents have been known

to cripple or disfigure their children to make them more successful beggars. A Saudi police officer said that the children had been arrested in Jeddah while they were begging illegally, adding: "Most of their parents left Saudi Arabia after completing their pilgrimage."

The girls huddled in the airport lounge overnight and most of yesterday before being sent to a juvenile detention centre. Social workers said photographs of the girls would be placed in newspapers in the hope of contacting their parents.

Inspectors to check on 'sick' Germans

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

CONTROL teams will be knocking on the doors of German civil servants who have telephoned their offices to say they are ill. Helmut Kohl's Cabinet approved the measure yesterday as part of a crackdown on high absenteeism in ministries, public institutions and schools.

Unions reacted furiously: the German Civil Servants' Federation spoke of "police methods" and Herbert Mai, head of the public services union, said it was "a totally unacceptable intrusion into personal privacy".

Forced to save money by the push for European monetary union, Manfred Kanther, the Interior Minister, has been investigating why the sickness rate for civil servants is 26 per cent higher than in private industry. Public-sector workers call in sick on more than 24 days a year and middle managers report sick on average 18 days a year. At the upper reaches of the civil service, absenteeism trails off. The overall average is 17 days a year. The figure does not include officially authorised time off for medical curers in spa resorts or occasional days taken off and not registered by the management.

The Government estimates that, if it could bring sick leave down to the level of private industry, it would save more than £200 million a year. "What is wrong with our civil servants?" the *Hamburger Abendblatt* asks. "Are they more sensitive than people in industry? Is it the hellish stress?"

The main problem area is education. In 1989, 32 per cent of teachers retired early because of illness. By 1994, Bavaria reckoned that more than 53 per cent of its teachers were taking early retirement. On average teachers, classed as civil servants in Germany, retire at the age of 53.

Industrial workers tend to report sick for physical ailments, above all back pain. Teachers, according to the Bavarian Auditors' Office, suffer chiefly from psychosomatic complaints. "Teachers simply burn out early," Otto Herz, a teachers' union executive member, said.

Bulgarian leader makes election vow to placate protesters

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN SOFIA

A POSSIBLE compromise began to emerge in the Bulgarian crisis yesterday as President Stoyanov, who takes over as President on Sunday, said he intended to appoint a Socialist Prime Minister as an interim measure and call early elections for June or October.

A presidential adviser appeared on television to say that "consultations on ways to can now begin". But in the ruling Socialist began negotiations with the opposition, which has been boycotted by

more than a week of huge street protests. Ivan Kostov, the opposition's leader, said he still wanted the Socialists to give up power immediately.

The Socialists said that they accepted "in principle the idea of early elections in the context of the implementation of a national anti-crisis programme". Mr Kostov said this was meaningless because any interim government would need broad social support.

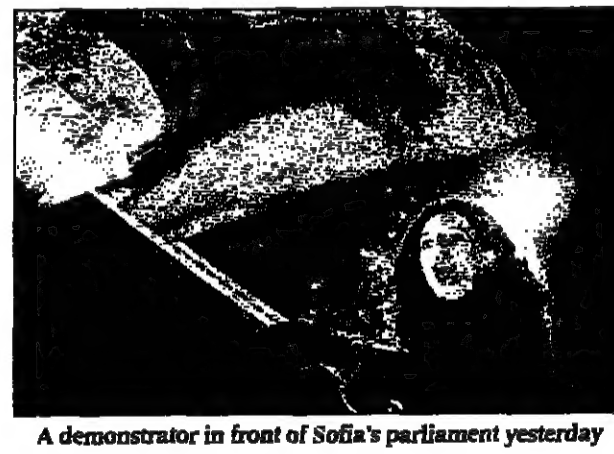
Mr Stoyanov, a dapper conservative lawyer elected in November, said he understood the strength of feeling which had brought tens of thousands of impoverished Bulgarians on to the streets for

the past nine days. Millions of factory workers went on strike yesterday to support the protest against the Socialists (the former Communists), who were elected in 1994 for a four-year term but have presided over a catastrophic descent towards bankruptcy.

Mr Stoyanov visited a hospital where demonstrators injured in last weekend's clashes in and around parliament had been taken. After handing out oranges from a plastic bag, he said he intended to appoint Nikolai Dobrev, the Socialist Interior Minister, as Prime Minister in succession to Zhan

Vadenov, who resigned last month. Mr Stoyanov said a Dobrev government could then negotiate a reform package with the International Monetary Fund to stabilise the currency, the lev, which has become almost worthless. Mr Dobrev said he was prepared to negotiate a "currency board" involving a fixed exchange rate and to limit the Government's powers in order to stabilise the lev.

There was no let-up in the protests yesterday. In Sofia, demonstrators chanted "Elections now" and "Red mafia out".



A demonstrator in front of Sofia's parliament yesterday

MPs start moves to impeach Yeltsin

FROM RICHARD BRISTON IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S Communist-dominated parliament yesterday began impeachment proceedings against the ailing President Yeltsin, claiming that he can no longer perform his duties.

Viktor Ilyukhin, the head of the parliamentary security committee, who drew up the draft Bill put before the Duma (lower house), said that Mr Yeltsin should be dismissed if it were enacted. The Bill, which may be debated on Friday, calls on members to "regard the powers of the President as prematurely terminated due to his consistent incapacity to perform his duties for health reasons".

There was no indication last night that the Bill was any more likely to succeed than two similar Bills launched last year, not least because of the ambiguities of Russian law. Gennadi Seleznev, the Communist Speaker of parliament, said he doubted that the Bill would survive its first reading because the constitution was "very hazy" on the subject of removing the head of state.

Mr Yeltsin was said last night to be feeling much better, with his temperature and blood pressure back to normal. "His condition has improved considerably, he is more physically active," the presidential press service said after doctors examined the President at the Central Clinical Hospital in Moscow, where he met Anatoli Chubais, the Kremlin Chief of Staff, for 40 minutes.



General Lebed and his wife at Moscow airport yesterday

Lebed lays siege to Bonn leadership

BY ROGER BOYES

ALEKSANDR LEBED, one of the most serious challengers to succeed the ailing President Yeltsin, yesterday embarked on a three-day whirlwind courtship of the Germans, setting out his credentials as a Kremlin leader.

On the eve of talks with politicians, industrialists and bankers, the outspoken General Lebed, 46, predicted the rapid decline and ousting of Boris Yeltsin, who has a good friendship with Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor. He said it was time for the Germans to realise the folly of putting all their bets on Mr Yeltsin — in two months at the latest even the greatest optimists would recognise the incapacity of the President to carry out his duties.

Russia, the general said, would start to lose patience in March, and there was the risk of serious popular unrest. "By comparison, Bosnia and Bulgaria will be a picnic." New elections this year would be the only way to head off a revolt. "Even the patience of

my people, who have been patient as a donkey, must run out some time."

General Lebed is eager to meet Herr Kohl, but the German leader is less enthusiastic and reluctant to appear disloyal. The general, who won 15 per cent in the presidential election and was briefly Mr Yeltsin's security adviser, will meet senior figures from Herr Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic opposition.

In Bavaria, he will meet Edmund Stoiber, the regional Prime Minister, whose Christian Social Union, the CDU's sister party, has shown some interest in General Lebed's fledgling Russian Republic People's Party.

To persuade the Germans of his goodwill, General Lebed is presenting a rather moderate view on NATO's eastward enlargement. He understood, he told the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, that NATO was not preparing an offensive alliance.

Swiss bank gets rid of Nazi-era records

FROM PETER CAPELLA IN ZURICH

ZURICH police are investigating why historical records from Switzerland's largest bank were thrown away by a bank historian, despite a ban on the destruction of documents that might disclose details about financial transactions with Nazi Germany.

The Union Bank of Switzerland agreed yesterday there was a clear case of negligence when the files, some dating back to 1863, were sent to be shredded. A security guard at the bank's Zurich headquarters found them in the shredding room last week and handed the papers to a local Jewish organisation, which told the public prosecutor's office last Friday. The bank said it regretted the "mistake".

Christoph Meili, the guard, said last night that he had been suspended by the security firm that employed him. He added that he was unable to recover all the documents he had seen, but some related to business dealings with Germany in the 1930s and 1940s. A lawyer for Zurich's Jewish Community said he could be prosecuted under banking secrecy laws.

Gertrud Erismann, for the bank, said an internal inquiry found that the papers had nothing to do with dormant Jewish "Holocaust accounts". Bern: The Swiss Government said yesterday that it would give Poland a list of 53 Polish Holocaust victims whose Swiss bank accounts were declared ownerless after the Second World War and handed to Warsaw. (Reuter)

Instructors fined for ski deaths

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FOUR French ski instructors have been given suspended prison sentences and ordered to pay fines totalling Fr400,000 (£45,000) and compensation by a French court after the deaths of two skiers

in separate avalanche accidents last year.

The tough sentences, reflecting a new determination by the judicial authorities to punish reckless skiers, were handed down on Monday, just 24 hours before another skiing fatality in the French Alps. The four had caused

fatal avalanches by skiing off piste.

Another skier was killed yesterday near the Aussois winter sports centre, close to Modane. The man, 50, who has not been identified, was caught in an avalanche while skiing in an off-piste area at an altitude of 10,000ft.

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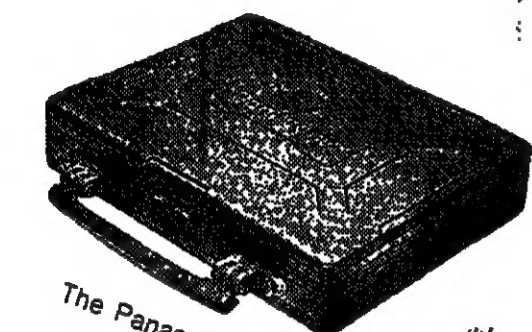
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Clinton launches aid package for sick Washington

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON yesterday stepped into the growing row about the near-collapse of the American capital by proposing that the federal Government pour billions of dollars into Washington DC's roads, prisons, medical care and pensions.

In return, in a deal which would bring the District of Columbia under the control of the United States Government and mark the end of its 23-year experiment in ruling itself, the federal Government would collect the city's taxes and abolish the annual federal subsidy.

The plans represent a sharp switch by the White House, which before Christmas looked frostily on the suggestion by an independent board that it should help to save Washington from squalor and decay.

Mr Clinton has faced growing local criticism and, it is reported, pressure from his wife, Hillary. His aides say he is now convinced that the capital, as a national asset, should be run by the Government.

The core of the problem is that the city's population, which is 80 per cent black, is too poor and pays too little in taxes to support basic infrastructure and services, let alone the national monuments which attract millions of visitors each year. As crime and poverty have spread and schools have deteriorated, businesses and affluent residents have fled to the suburbs, shrinking the city's revenues.

New figures yesterday showed that the city's infant death rate, for decades among the worst in the country, had improved, partly because fewer poor women were using drugs during pregnancy. However, Washington infants still die at more than twice the

rate of those nationwide. Washington won control of its finances and management in 1974, in response to protests that a predominantly black city should not be run by white government officials. Under the deal, Congress each year approves the city's budget — about \$5 billion (£3 billion) — and its federal subsidy, currently about \$660 million.



Homeless men sit on a street grate to keep warm in front of the Washington Monument

But self-rule has never worked smoothly. Clinton Administration officials yesterday put some blame for the city's plight on local government. Marion Barry, the Mayor, imprisoned for crack possession after three terms in office but subsequently re-elected, has regularly been attacked for inefficiency.

However, White House officials also argue that the burden placed on the city in 1974 was too great. Mr Barry, who agrees, says that Mr Clinton's proposals are "heading in the right direction", even though they could shrink his authority.

According to the plans, the Internal Revenue Service would collect the city's income taxes. In return, the federal Government would pay for Washington's \$5 billion shortfall in pensions and pay more towards medical care. It would pay for prisons and courts, to be managed by the Justice Department, and inject \$1.4 billion into repairing bridges and roads.

Mr Clinton's plans need the approval of the Republican-controlled Congress, which could give the Administration a rough ride. Congressmen and senators have traditionally been reluctant to be seen to be giving more cash to Washington, fearing that it could lose them votes at home. Members of both parties are worried about giving the District more money before the city makes cutbacks and management reforms which Congress has already demanded.

UN debts: President Clinton will ask Congress to allocate \$1 billion to pay America's debts to the United Nations. However, the Administration plans to hold back the money until the financially troubled world body makes reforms.

Judges to debate presidential sex case options

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE nine judges of the US Supreme Court, troubled by the lack of legal precedent, meet privately today to decide whether President Clinton, while in office, should stand trial for sexual harassment.

After an hour of legal argument on Monday, the arbiters of the American Constitution may now be forced to issue a bold policy judgment that could affect occupants of the Oval Office for generations to come. They are clearly daunted by the weight of the decision and, although no opinion is required until June, the justices appeared yesterday to be seeking some form of middle ground that would both respect the office of the presidency and the needs of the individual.

Paula Jones, a former Arkansas state employee, is alleging that in 1991 she was led by a state trooper to meet Mr Clinton, then the Governor, in his Little Rock hotel room. She says Mr Clinton then asked her to perform oral sex. The President has denied Ms Jones's accusation.

The harsh questioning this week by the judges of the lawyers representing Mr Clinton and Ms Jones suggested that the Supreme Court is worried about the adoption of either extreme position: total immunity for the President or none.

Precedents have failed to help the court. In the 1982 case *Nixon v Fitzgerald*, it was decided that an American president had immunity from

civil action for anything done within the "outer perimeter" of his official duties.

The question of how to handle a case involving alleged actions beyond that boundary, either because the allegations date from before the President's inauguration or because they involve highly personal behaviour, has never been tested by the court.

Although the lawyers and judges referred to constitutional doctrines such as the separation of powers and the supremacy of federal law, as well as various forms of official immunity under English common law, the court seems to be facing what essentially is a policy judgement.

Most of the justices indicated that they did not want to hand a trial judge the power to require the President's attendance in court at any time while in office. But they did not see why "third-party witnesses", such as the Arkansas state troopers in this case, could not be ordered to give depositions under oath.

If such an approach were to be adopted, it could prove politically damaging for Mr Clinton. Ms Jones's lawyers, who have been barred since 1994 from taking any depositions or undertaking any other "discovery" elements of the case, are eager to record evidence from witnesses who were in the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock on the day in question.

Leading article, page 17

Democrats mishandle Gingrich tape 'plot'

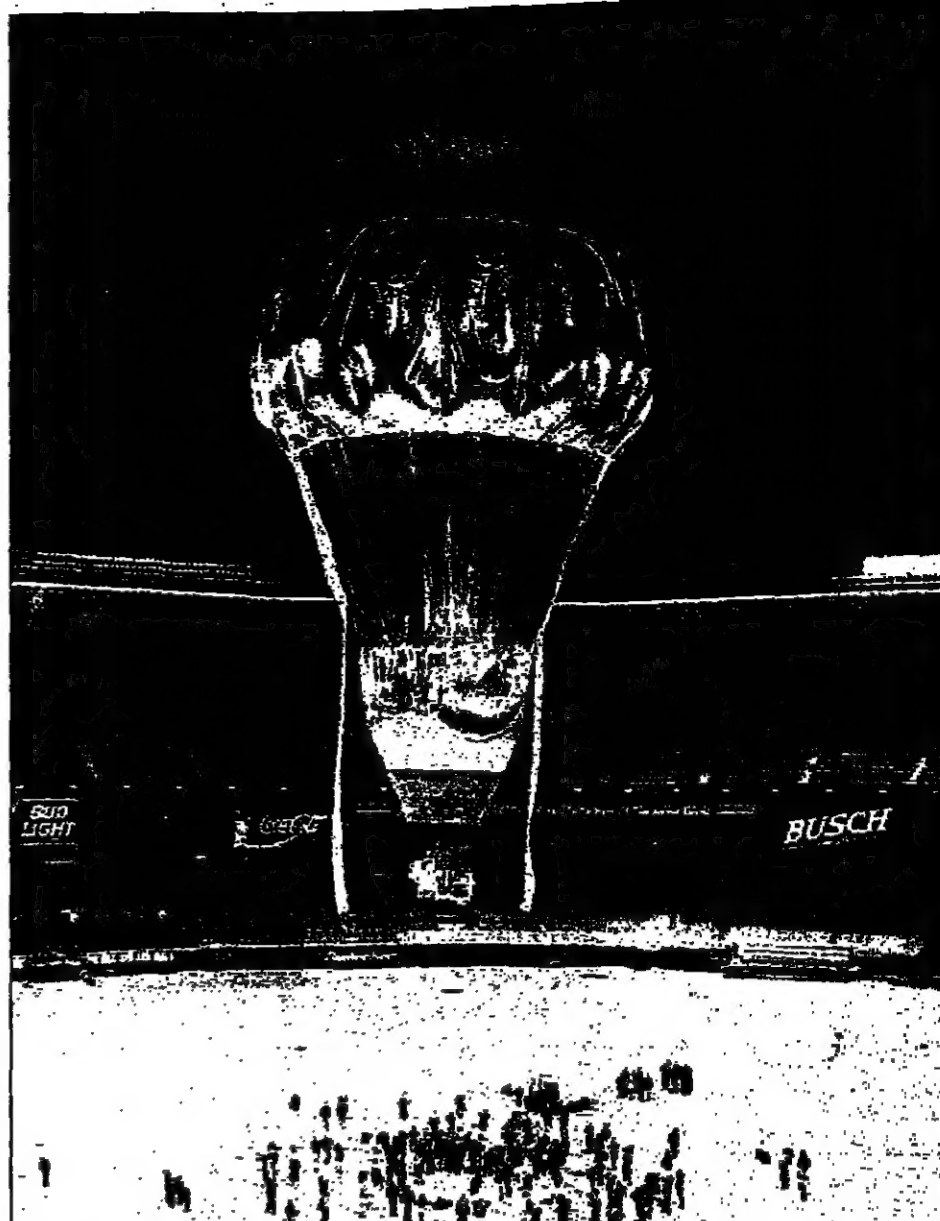
By TOM RHODES

ATTEMPTS to demonise Newt Gingrich became a tactical disaster last night after a telephone recording of the House Speaker, obtained by a Democrat, was referred to the Justice Department.

Alice and John Martin, two active Florida Democrats who have admitted making the tape, said they had given the recording to Jim McDermott, a senior-ranking Democrat on the ethics committee investigating the Speaker.

Although there is no suggestion that Mr McDermott shared the recording with panel colleagues, it was leaked anonymously to two large-circulation newspapers. Republicans claim Mr McDermott was responsible. Mr McDermott then gave the recording to his committee, but the Republicans refused to receive it, passing it to the Justice Department. Mr McDermott last night said it was absurd to consider prosecuting those who made the tape in good faith, but Republicans could hardly conceal their glee that Democrats had risked committing a crime to destroy Mr Gingrich.

The telephone conversation, recorded last month, shows the Speaker working behind the scenes to secure a pact with fellow Republicans to spare him a full-scale public trial for ethical misconduct. The ethics committee is investigating whether he misused tax-exempt charitable donations for political purposes.



Steve Fossett takes off from St Louis on his second attempt to fly round the world

Solo balloonist takes on the world after a cold start

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

AN AMERICAN balloonist had a frosty start yesterday after taking off in an attempt to become the first person to fly solo round the world non-stop. One of two heaters aboard Steve Fossett's *Solo Spirit* refused to work.

Mr Fossett, 52, a multi-millionaire commodities dealer from Colorado, reported the heater problem as *Solo Spirit* was at 18,000ft over North Carolina, shortly before reaching the Atlantic coast.

"We're committed now to crossing the Atlantic, but the heater is certainly a worry," said Bo Kemper, his project manager. Temperatures on the trip are expected to fall to -58F (-50C).

The attempt to fly round the world comes after two unsuccessful missions by other balloonists this month. They were not solo.

One of his rivals, Richard Branson, the British entrepreneur, travelled to St Louis, Missouri, to wish Mr Fossett good luck as he started his voyage on Monday night.



Fossett: "A lot of people may be jealous of me"

"This is one of the bravest things I have ever seen a man do," said Mr Branson. "If anyone can do it, I suspect Steve can."

Although physically unassuming, Mr Fossett has much of Phileas Fogg or the Montgolfier Brothers about him: he is making his circumnavigation attempt with the minimum of equipment, in a capsule which is smaller and

less sophisticated than those of Mr Branson and the Swiss team which last week came to grief soon after the start of their attempt.

Apart from the sole heater, he will be protected from the cold in his cramped, Plexiglass-roofed bubble capsule by a couple of layers of warm clothing, with a few changes of socks. Oxygen supplies will help him to survive the altitude.

For food he has taken a modest supply of MREs (US Army-style "meals ready to eat"), which gastronomically leave something to be desired, and as much tapwater as he could accommodate in containers. His latrine for the next 18 days will be a humble bucket. Will it be emptied over the side of the capsule? "I'd prefer not to say," said Mr Kemper yesterday from mission headquarters in Chicago.

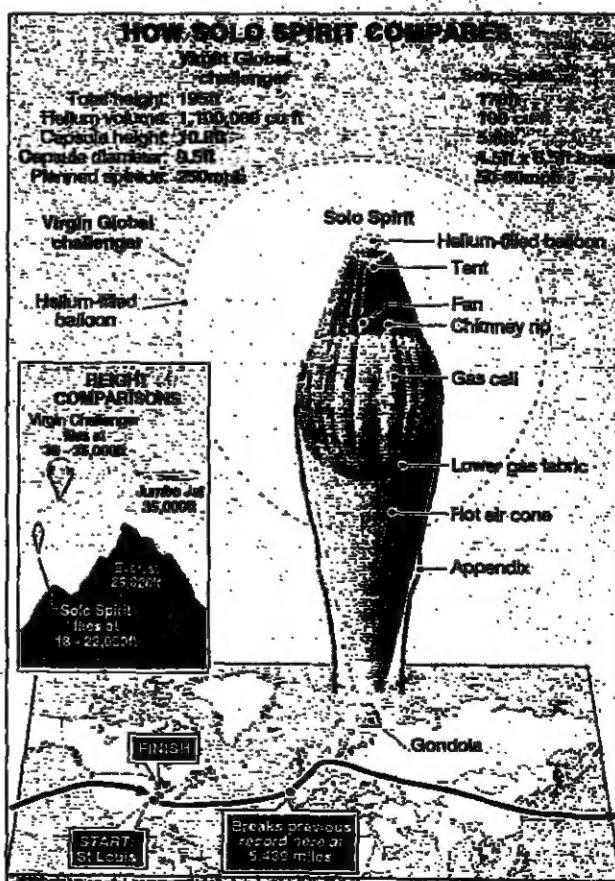
At 3pm London time yesterday, *Solo Spirit* was floating at 47 knots over Winston-Salem, North Carolina, a couple of hours or so behind schedule. Weather forecasters predicted a freshening of winds which could increase the balloon's speed.

It is expected to arrive over Europe on the northern coast of Portugal, before swinging north over Denmark. If wind directions change, it is possible *Solo Spirit* will float further to the north, possibly even over Britain. Its scheduled path will take it over Russia and China before its planned return to America and a landing in Illinois.

Mr Fossett is keeping in contact with his wife, Peggy — who is a keen balloonist — and his team managers by a satellite-assisted fax machine and computer e-mail.

Shortly before *Solo Spirit* took off from the Bush stadium in St Louis, Mr Fossett was asked if people might not consider him a lunatic to attempt such an adventure. "I'm not sure about that," he replied. "I reckon there's a whole lot of people out there who may be jealous of me having this chance."

It is his second tilt at global circumnavigation. Last year he made it from South Dakota to the Atlantic coast of Canada before technical problems forced him to crash-land.

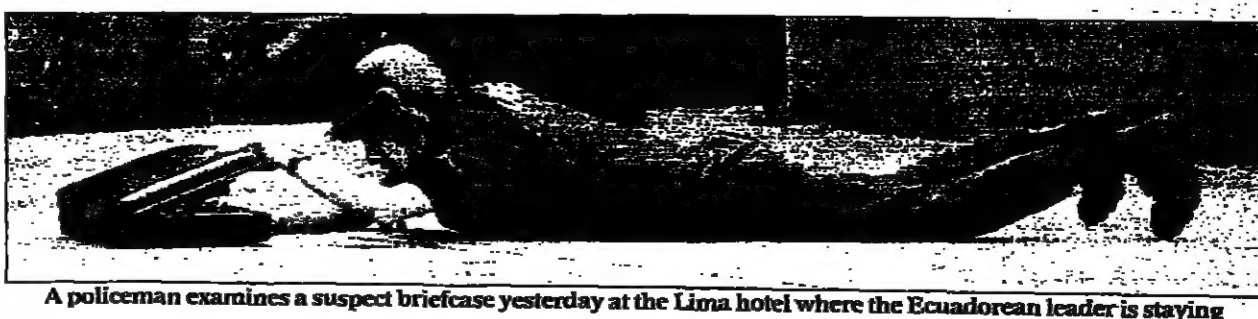


Sushi sales boom as Peruvians cash in on siege

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN LIMA

THE month-long hostage siege of the Japanese Ambassador's residence in a leafy Lima suburb has sent property and hotel prices soaring, and triggered a lucrative trade in takeaway sushi for cameramen camped at the scene.

Japanese television networks and other international media have taken up almost every room in top hotels in San Isidro to be near the besieged mansion, and paid large sums to set up their offices in neighbourhood homes. One television network is said to be paying \$50,000 a week (£30,000) rent for a thirteenth-floor flat overlooking the compound in which Marxist rebels are still



A policeman examines a suspect briefcase yesterday at the Lima hotel where the Ecuadorian leader is staying

holding 74 hostages, including top Peruvian officials, the Japanese Ambassador and at least 20 Japanese executives.

The siege entered its fifth week yesterday with no end yet in sight. But security around the residence was visibly tighter with a visit by President Bucaram, the first

by an Ecuadorian Head of State, who was staying at a hotel in the vicinity. An army helicopter flew over the residence during the day.

Journalists have meanwhile moved into colonial houses in the diplomatic district. "We have decided to move out from our home and let a Japanese

TV crew have it because they are paying so much," said the owner of a house behind the ambassador's home.

Rooms in the new five-star Oro Verde Hotel, the nearest to the residence, have shot up from \$150 to \$300 a night. A bed and breakfast establishment near by, occupied by

photographers and cameramen, is even building an extra floor to house more journalists.

"This siege has kept occupancy rates up like never before in Lima," said one hotelier.

One of Lima's top Japanese restaurants is running a round-the-clock sushi and sa-

shimi delivery service to Japanese photographers awaiting news developments along roads leading to the residence.

La Bombonier, a small French-style cafe which used to be an afternoon meeting place for rich elderly ladies, now provides lunch and menus in Japanese to hundreds of cellular phone-wielding reporters.

Contrary to early predictions, tourism has not suffered and tour companies are running coach trips to the environs of the rebel-held building before flying visitors to the Inca ruins at Machu Picchu.

One air-conditioned bus arrived with dozens of Japanese tourists who wanted to have their pictures taken next to heavily armed police and television cameramen.

Medicine to settle deal on

مكذبا من الأصل

Medicines rushed to settlers before deal on Hebron

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI troops, fearing violence, rushed emergency medical supplies to the three Jewish settler enclaves in the heart of Hebron as negotiations to secure a deal handing over four fifths of the city to the Palestinian Authority continued late last night.

Speaking hours before a planned meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to try again to settle the pull-out deal, David Wilder, spokesman for the 450 Jews who live among 120,000 Palestinians, said the new supplies indicated Israeli government fears that a "mass terrorist" attack might occur.

In an interview with Israeli radio broadcast shortly before Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestinian Authority, were due to meet at the Erez crossing-point between Israel and Gaza, Mr Wilder said: "It seems that they [the Israeli authorities] are afraid that something like this might occur and also that one neighbourhood may be separated from the others and it may be difficult to reach them with emergency equipment."

The eleventh-hour distribution of the supplies added to the atmosphere of crisis in a city that is holy to Jews and Muslims and has a history of intercommunal violence. In 1929, 67 Jews were massacred by Arabs and the rest of the then Jewish community fled to Jerusalem.

Voicing the anger and frustration felt by many of the hardline Jews who live in three main settlement areas that are cheek-by-jowl with

Palestinian residents of the city, Mr Wilder added: "I find it absurd to find ourselves in what is an era of peace where emergency medical supplies have to be distributed throughout Hebron."

"It seems that the right-wing 'Israeli Government' cannot assure us of our safety. Yesterday Yitzhak Mordechai, the Defence Minister, said very, very clearly that they cannot assure us of our safety in Hebron. I do not understand how an Israeli Government can withdraw knowing that they are leaving Jews' lives in jeopardy."

Equal misgivings about potential violence were voiced by leading Hebron Palestinians who fear that armed Jewish settlers or their supporters may go on the rampage in a last-ditch attempt to scupper any deal to implement the long-delayed evacuation of Israeli troops.

As right-wing Jews contin-

ued lobbying to persuade members of Mr Netanyahu's Cabinet to vote against any final US-brokered deal on the pullback from Hebron and large rural areas of the occupied West Bank, Mr Wilder said: "Netanyahu is on the verge of making a pact with the devil. If he goes through with this, he will place all our lives in jeopardy."

Naom Arnon, another leader of the settlers in Hebron, said that violence against the Jewish enclaves could involve sniper fire, mass attacks by "an incited mob" or isolated attacks. "This terrible agreement consciously puts the Jewish settlement of Hebron in what is almost certain to be a trap," he said, adding: "The IDF [Israeli Defence Force] leadership and the Government know all about the anticipated dangers: they have told us about them during conversations and meetings."

As negotiations continued to try to overcome remaining obstacles before the midnight border meeting, which was announced by Dennis Ross, the American special envoy, Mr Netanyahu said that, despite a mood of cautious optimism among senior United States officials, there was no guarantee that the elusive deal would be reached.

"The chance that we will finish this evening exists, but it is not guaranteed," he said. The Prime Minister, who spent the day trying to persuade doubters among his Cabinet to support the deal, added: "I am convinced that we can seal this agreement in a very short time with good will from the other side."

Libya relents on desert exiles

Tunis: Libya reversed course yesterday, saying Palestinians stranded on the Egypt-Libya border could return to Libya. Hundreds have been stuck in the desert since September 1995 when Colonel Muammar Gaddafi ordered thousands home in a campaign against Palestinian-Israeli peace accords. Israel controls access to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, allowing in only residents. (Reuters)



A stranded newborn grey whale that was found off southern California is fed by Sea World staff at San Diego (Giles Whittell writes). Thought to be the youngest whale yet rescued, it has gained 50lb thanks to a two-gallon mixture of milk and purged squid and dam fed to it by funnel and pipe eight times a day.

Fattening a lost 1,710lb baby

The weekend by Venice Beach — better known for its narcissistic body-builders. Lethargic, dehydrated and barely conscious, it was manoeuvred into a lorry and taken to a 40ft tank at the theme park. Already 13ft and weighing 1,710lb, it has caught the

attention of the public and local media as it appears only whales can. Reports on its weight, health and prognosis feature almost hourly in television and radio bulletins, and money seems to be no object in the attempt to save her, although California greys are now thriving thanks

to decades of stringent anti-whaling laws. Once hunted to the brink of extinction, the massive creatures now migrate in large, undisturbed pods from the Bering Sea to the Mexican Pacific every winter.

Within a year the whale should have outgrown every tank in the theme park, having put on up to 9 tonnes. Then it must be returned to the sea.

Disney damps down frontal assault at Splash Mountain

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

EMBARRASSED officials at Disneyland are cracking down on women who expose their breasts for the cameras on one of the theme park rides. The officials have also launched an investigation to

find an employee thought to have published such pictures on the Internet.

A digital camera automatically takes souvenir snaps of every boarder of visitors on the final 50ft plunge of the Splash Mountain flume — a thrill that induces some flumers to raise their shirts.

Last summer the theme park sought to curb the practice by stopping the ride when bare chests were spotted and broadcasting a pre-recorded message: "Please put your shirts back on. It's very unappealing, and frankly it's making me sick."

Souvenir photographs are screened by Disneyland before being offered to visitors, but the company that prides itself on purveying only pure family fun has failed to prevent images of toplessness on Splash Mountain from appearing in cyberspace.

An internal investigation launched last year has turned up no culprits, but security has been tightened in the picture-taking booth. "This is obviously something we can't condone," a Disney spokesman said.

Sudan set to fight 'holy war' after raids

By MARK HENDERSON

SUDAN called for an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council yesterday as President al-Bashir's Islamic Government appealed to the people to fight a holy war against what it says are Ethiopian attacks.

Khartoum University was closed to allow students to join a full mobilisation of the army, announced at a rally in the capital. Ethiopia has denied any involvement in the fighting in Blue Nile province of eastern Sudan, where mainly Christian Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels have captured the town of Kurmuk and three military bases. The rebels are threatening to overrun Damazin, which controls 80 per cent of Khartoum's water supply.

More than 50,000 civilians have already been forced to flee their homes in eastern Sudan by a scorched-earth policy adopted by government forces, according to Westerners who have made a secret visit to the area. The Sudanese Army began bombing and burning villages in the Blue Nile and Upper Nile regions in March last year to counter an SPLA offensive. More than 5,000 refugees have fled to Ethiopia, and many more are sheltering behind the lines of the SPLA, which controls much of the Christian and animist south. "The devastation in eastern Sudan is unbelievable," Baroness Cox, who visited the area with the charity Christian Solidarity International last week, said yesterday. "You can walk from one burnt-out village to another for eight hours on end."

Government forces have burnt crops and food stores and threatened aid agencies if they try to operate in the region. Hundreds of civilians, mainly children, have already died of starvation and disease, in addition to those killed in the attacks.

The SPLA, led by John Garang, has been fighting the Government since 1983 in a civil war in which 1.3 million people have died.

Pretoria risks aid cutoff over Syrian arms sale

By R.W. JOHNSON IN JOHANNESBURG AND TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

South Africa's willingness to cut off economic assistance to South Africa if it goes ahead with a planned arms sale to Syria. The US State Department said yesterday that American law prevented recipients of aid from selling arms to countries, such as Syria, that had been identified as supporting international terrorism.

"It would be extremely serious if these sales occurred," Nicholas Burns, the department spokesman, said. "The United States hopes that the South African Government will not consummate arms sales to a country that supports terrorism."

Under the deal, yet to be settled, Pretoria would sell \$400 million worth of tank fire-control systems that would enable Syria to upgrade its 1,500 T72 tanks, giving them night vision and combat capability at least on a par with their Israeli counterparts.

Although the South African Cabinet is not due to confirm, or reject the sale before its meeting next week, it is difficult to see how either decision can be taken without a humiliating climbdown on the one hand or, on the other, a collision with America, Israel and South Africa's Jews. Pre-

toria's apparent willingness thus to affect the delicate Middle East military balance is unwelcome enough to America and Israel, but it is the fact that Syria features prominently on the US list of countries sponsoring state terrorism that has roused particular American wrath.

Professor Kader Asmal, the minister who chairs the South African Cabinet's Conventional Arms Committee, has vainly tried to insist that the matter is "not in the public domain", but it is known that the Asmal committee has accepted the deal on condition that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki agrees. That puts Mr Mbeki in a difficult position, for he is bound to come under fierce pressure from Israel and America to stop the deal. Then, to many within the ANC, the issue is one of national independence and the retention of links with radical regimes that supported the ANC during the anti-apartheid struggle.

South Africa's ties with Iran, Cuba and Libya have drawn unfavourable American comment, as has an oil deal with Iran and a previous delivery of arms to Iraq; indeed, America is still operating arms sanctions against

South Africa for arms smuggling it carried out in 1991.

The US Counter-Terrorism Act does not specifically mandate sanctions against third countries that sell arms to Syria and something may depend on whether Mr Mbeki can convince the State Department that South Africa is not repeating its previous history of selling on illegally obtained items of US military technology. That could be a tall order: some question whether South Africa would be able to provide the sophisticated computerised equipment it is offering to Syria without at least copying Western equipment.

Mr Mbeki's efforts to calm matters have been torpedoed first by the State Department and then by the White House, both of which gave unusually tough public warnings that such a sale would be "extremely serious" and "a very bad idea" which would necessitate a hard look at continuing American aid to South Africa.

This was too much for Parks Mankhahana, President Mandela's spokesman. "We detest this kind of behaviour," he said. "We do not like grandstanding and they should not do that. They are not going to guide us, they are not going to tell us what to do."

Top suspect in genocide trial

Kigali: Rwanda yesterday put on trial a prominent politician accused of being a ringleader of the 1994 genocide of minority Tutsis masterminded by Hutu extremists.

Although an ethnic Tutsi by birth, Froduald Karamira became a member of the Hutu tribe under a Rwandan custom. He was a vice-president of the extremist MDR- Power party under the ousted Hutu Government and is the most senior suspect held in Rwanda on charges of taking part in the mass slaughter of about 800,000 people.

He is accused of inciting genocide through broadcasts on state-run radio. His lawyer was granted an adjournment of 15 days as he had never met his client before. Similar trials have begun in Arusha, Tanzania. (Reuters)



Froduald Karamira, left, listening as charges of genocide are read in a Kigali court yesterday

South Korea faces more strikes

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

SOUTH Korean workers responded half-heartedly to a call for an all-out stoppage yesterday, but union leaders pledged to continue protests and industrial action until the Government repealed a con-

troversial labour law. Buses and underground trains ran normally in the capital, Seoul, and banks opened. The only disruption was caused by most taxis being on strike.

Several thousand employees of banks and stockbrokers waited until lunch to join a rally against the legislation,

which makes it easier for companies to lay off workers and impose longer hours.

The outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions said its 500,000 members would begin an indefinite strike today. Transport and telecommunications workers also threaten to strike.

WORLD SUMMARY

38 killed as bus plunges into mud

Cairo: Thirty-eight passengers died and at least 29 were hurt yesterday when a public transport bus plummeted off a bridge here and landed upside down on the muddy bank of the River Nile.

Police said the bus flipped over several times as it fell from the Sabel bridge in the poor Cairo district of Rod al-Farag. Many victims died of suffocation or were crushed.

In Ivory Coast, 21 people died when a bus spun out of control and hit a tree near Gagnoa, northwest of Abidjan, the capital. In South Africa, at least 68 people were injured when a bus overturned in the black township of Botshabelo, east of Bloemfontein. (Reuters, AFP)

Court urged to jail Graf's father

Mannheim: German prosecutors called for Peter Graf, the father of Steffi Graf, the tennis star, to be jailed for six years and nine months on six counts of trying to evade a total of DM19.2 million (£7.5 million) in tax on his daughter's earnings between 1989 and 1993. Herr Graf, whose lawyer is due to make a closing statement in the next few days, is on trial with his former tax adviser, Joachim Eckardt. The verdicts are expected on January 24. (Reuters)

Israeli mayor goes on trial

Tel Aviv: Ehud Olmert, the Mayor of Jerusalem and a former Israeli minister, went on trial accused of campaign financing fraud in the 1983 election. Mr Olmert, a political ally of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, said he had no part in an alleged fictitious public relations firm set up to receive and disguise illegal corporate donations. He was Likud Party treasurer at the time. (Reuters)

De Niro seeks access to twins

New York: The actor Robert De Niro is seeking visitation rights to twins he fathered by artificial insemination with his former girlfriend Toukie Smith (Quentin Letts writes). De Niro was not expected to have much contact with the boys, now 15 months, but has reportedly become close to them. He is asking Manhattan Family Court to clarify his parental rights.

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"The attempt to portray prisons as holiday camps is not borne out by my experience," says Douglas Hurd

I am not afraid of being called liberal

So Douglas Hurd is to become the chairman of the Prison Reform Trust. Even the man who asked him to do the job, Stephen Shaw, the PRT's director, admits it is a "remarkable decision". I have been dispatched to the ninth floor of the NatWest building in the City to ask Mr Hurd why he made it.

As the express lift whoshes me on my way, I review the subtext of the interview: the PRT is a small liberal pressure group which campaigns for fewer people to be sent to prison and for better, more enlightened treatment of those who are there. Douglas Hurd is a former Tory Home Secretary and, until the forthcoming election, a Conservative MP. As Home Secretary, 1985-89, he set in train the 1991 Criminal Justice Act, the aim of which was to find ways of punishing less serious offenders without putting them in prison. The present Tory Home Secretary, Michael Howard, is in favour of putting more people in prison. He, famously, thinks that "prison works".

The lift bears me into a plush foyer. Mr Hurd, I am told, is making a couple of calls. I sit and wait and continue my revision. Under Mr Howard's latest proposals for mandatory terms for repeat offenders — the Crimes (Sentences) Bill, currently proceeding through Parliament — the prison population is expected to increase from 58,500 to some 73,000 over the next 15 years. During the debate on the second reading of the Bill, Mr Hurd — along with several other notable Tories — warned the House of the effect of this increase on the possibility of effective rehabilitation. He said: "It is possible that our prisons will turn out more accomplished criminals, and that the purpose of the Bill will, in the medium and long term, be frustrated."

And now we meet, and I shake one of what were always reputed to be the safest hands in British government. The hand extends from the sleeve of a formal suit worn with a more expressive tie than it might have been during Mr Hurd's ten years as first Home then Foreign Secretary. Mr Hurd has a long body topped off with a long, narrow head, made even longer by his white quiff. We stand awkwardly at the window. After a bit of chat about the view we get down to business.

Mr Hurd will take over as chairman of the trust in November. The retiring chairman is Jon Snow,

Former Home Secretary Douglas Hurd wants to reform prison. Interview by Robert Crampton

the newsreader. Was Mr Hurd surprised to be asked to succeed him? "I was rather, yes, I was rather. But the PRT is all-party. Conservatives were among those who urged me most strongly to accept. It is not a body that is in confrontation with the Home Office or the Prison Service."

He chooses his words carefully. The PRT is certainly not in confrontation with either the prison governors or the civil servants at the Home Office. The Home Secretary, however, is another matter. Jon Snow, in his report for 1995-96, says this: "PRT may fundamentally disagree with the Home Secretary's assertion that 'Prison Works'."

I say to Mr Hurd: the PRT may be all-party, but if you look at its trustees — Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, QC, Edward Fitzgerald, QC, Silvia Casale, Trevor Phillips — it is obviously a liberalish body, isn't it? "With a small l, yes," he says. "But it is a broad church. I have my own views. It's not as if the PRT has a three-line whip."

Mr Hurd then, very politely, grabs hold of the interview for quite a while. He says: "Prison has four main purposes", and proceeds to list them. They are punishment, deterrence, incapacitation and rehabilitation. His main point is this: "If you send more people to prison you remove people from the streets, fine. There is an important short-term gain for public safety. But after a time, they come out again. You lock more people away, eventually you let more people out. What sort of people are they?"

"It wasn't me, it was my successor as Home Secretary that said in his White Paper that prison could be an 'expensive way of making bad people worse'. I suppose it was David Waddington, so it wasn't my phrase, but it could be so. What happens in prison does affect very much whether, quotes, 'Prison

Works' or not." He thinks that prisons have improved substantially since he was in charge of them — no more slopping out, no more three in a cell, no more prisoners held in police stations. I ask him if he was routinely shocked, visiting prisons ten years ago. "No, I wasn't." I ask him what emotional impact they had as places that have now drawn him back. "I think 60,000 people is a lot of people... It's a neglected problem, a forgotten subject. I've worked with three

'I can't remember a Prime Minister ever going near a prison'

Prime Ministers quite closely. I can't remember a Prime Minister ever going near a prison. The Princess Royal did, or has done. I don't know that other royals do."

We talk more about the Crime (Sentences) Bill, which the Government is desperate to pass before the dissolution. I say that it is a strange state of affairs when Douglas Hurd

and Kenneth Baker form the opposition to a government measure. "Well, I did point this out," he says. "There ought to be a discussion about these things... I'm not afraid of being called a liberal with a small l on these matters. I've always been against capital punishment. The attempt to portray prisons as holiday camps is not borne out by my experience. Someone commits suicide in prison once every five days. That's a funny sort of holiday camp."

That is quite animated for Mr Hurd. Encouraged, I have another go at getting him to have a go at Michael Howard. I point out that he was a Home Secretary who wanted numbers reduced. Mr Howard wants them increased, even at an estimated cost of £3 billion for 12 new prisons. "Yes, and he's entitled to, every Home Secretary is right to be discontented with what he finds, because crime and the fear of crime is such an evil. He has to have regard to numbers. Michael Howard believes — and I expect he's right — that he can manage. I had an actual crisis of numbers. He has a more manage-

able problem and therefore he can take these measures in a way which simply wasn't open." But you wouldn't have approved of filling the prisons even if they hadn't already been full? "I'm not sure about that because, you know, life's moved on since '87, '88."

Will you be voting for the Crime (Sentences) Bill? "I voted for the second reading. What about when it comes back for its final reading? He says: "I think, er, er, I expect so, but I think the Home Secretary always needs to listen carefully to points made. I'm weighing my words because it hasn't got to the Lords yet. Obviously there will be points made in the Lords which he will need to listen to." What points? "I don't know yet." Have you ever voted against the Government? "No, I have not." It would be a difficult thing for you to do? "Of course it would and at the moment I have no intention of doing so but I did say on second reading it will need careful scrutiny." What if the Bill comes back unamended? "I don't know the answer to that."

We talk about the Dutch auction taking place between the political parties on crime policy. Mr Hurd is at his most imperious: "I've never thought that criminal justice measures which were simply as a result of a calculation about votes were likely to be very effective. I've not discussed it with [Jack] Straw. I think it would be a great mistake if what happens in prisons gets left out simply because it's distasteful. I don't think that I'm a sofie on crime. I'm now in a position when I don't have to worry if the vindictive tendency in some newspapers [and some members of his own party] take it out on me. I don't have to worry about that anymore."

MEDIA

● **What Hurd said**
change his spots
with Straw
section 2, page 33

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A strong line on spring



Feminine frills and bold stripes are the catwalk directions to follow this summer, says Style Editor Grace Bradberry

The wise fashion shopper will already be thinking about what to buy for this spring. After one of the coldest winter spells on record, this may seem foolish, but in fact it will be only a matter of days before the new season's collections begin appearing on shop rails. It's often easier to make an early decision as high fashion stores often sell out of desirable items quickly. There's nothing worse than finding half a suit, or the perfect sweater in the wrong colour.

Over the past few years, the catwalk influence on high street fashion has grown increasingly strong. This season is no different, so even if you won't be spending £300 on a top, it helps to know what's going on.

Paradoxically, it has rarely been more difficult to divine the future of fashion from the bi-annual fashion shows. Hemlines no longer rise and fall together, and the stylists who put the catwalk look together are concerned increasingly with creating headlines rather than wearable outfits. As a result,

some of the "looks" that emerge are fads rather than genuine fashions. Others, although intended to be taken seriously, were surely designed in Hades.

Into this last category comes diaphanous — see-through to the rest of us — which was the big story from the spring-summer shows. Mindful no doubt of the old Dorothy Perkins slogan — "we've lined it so you'll like it" — many of the designers thoughtfully added a petticoat before sending the dresses over to England. Those with patterns are preferable, as they distract attention from the lumps and bumps that are all too visible when you're effectively wearing a nightie.

In response to the confusing mix of styles, the women who buy high fashion have begun focusing on a few cult items from specific designers. Likely contenders for summer include Prada's colonial shirt with military-style pockets and deep collar, Gucci's skimpily crocheted top and Dolce & Gabbana's diamond-holed crocheted cardie.

Other outfits that are likely to



attract plenty of magazine coverage, but are less likely to find their way into people's wardrobes, include John Galiano's floral print slip-dresses, Dolce & Gabbana's floral print coats, and Blumarine's striped off-the-shoulder top.

For those of us who won't be spending several hundred pounds on a cardigan this summer, these images will do one important

thing: define the season's mood. More accurately, there are several different moods, although two particular directions are making the strongest impact. One is towards eccentric femininity — plenty of frills and flowers, but with a bit of attitude thrown in. The other is towards strong lines — stripes, asymmetrical necklines, vertiginous V-necks, handkerchief hems.

Of the two, British women will feel safest with the harsh symmetries. By and large we recoil from anything overtly feminine and ruffled, and the danger with frofrou is that it can turn all but androgynous six-footers into wobbling blanchettes.

Thankfully, there are designers who understand this. The Dublin-based John Rocha, for example,



FAR LEFT: Sea print ruffle skirt, £390. Net T-shirt, £104, and crocheted bikini top, £365, all by John Rocha at Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London SW1. Tel: 0171-734 0123

LEFT: Chevron T-shirt, £26 by Jigsaw, 126-127 New Bond Street, London W1. Tel: 0171-491 4484

ABOVE: Spaghetti-strap dress, £164 by Beny Jackson, 311 Brompton Road, London SW3. Tel: 0171-589 7884
Lolita sofa, £1,250, Aero, 96 Westbourne Grove, London W2. Tel: 0171-221 1950

Photographer: PAUL MASSEY
Fashion Assistant: Deborah Brett. Hair and make-up: Carol Hart for Mary Quant. Model: Clare Wilson at Models One.

The strong lines are emphasised by pattern, but softened by colours that are just a bit "off". Blue is dominant, with every shade from ice to navy featured in the designers' catwalk shows. Brown remains strong, although winter's chocolate shades have given way to more subdued tones.

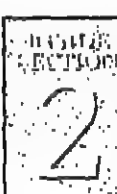
If you buy only one thing for this spring, let it be a trouser suit. Every designer featured at least one in their collection. The best had flat-fronted trousers, cut either straight and narrow, or wide-legged. While some designers are still giving skirts and trousers low waists to elongate the torso, others have gone for a surprisingly high-waisted look, emphasising the slenderness of tops and jackets.

The single-button tuxedo was the inspiration for many jackets. The Italian designer Anna Molinari cut hers straight and cropped it at the hipbone. Nicole Farhi's plastrine suit was a similar length. Both are cut close across the chest, creating a strong V-shape.

So much for the wearable, now for the unwearable. Or rather, the things that appear too dreadful for words, but which may yet take off. This year's "fun" fashions are pedal-pushers and boob-tubes. Fun for whom is a moot point.

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How to spend \$10 million and produce a Broadway flop. The expensive art of making musicals, page 34

Danger: you will never be the same again

Jane Shilling on the thrill of the Manolo Blahnik sale

Fifteen years ago this week, on a bitter cold morning, I got up early, left the dank Chelsea basement where I was living at the time, and walked down the road to Old Church Street, where I joined the end of a long queue.

It was a very British queue. Not the cheery, camp-stool, anorak and Thermos gang show to be found outside Harrods or Selfridges when the Massive Reductions signs go up, but the sort of *nomenclatura* throng who mill about at the crush bar of the Royal Opera House, or hop discreetly from foot to foot outside the loo at Glyndebourne. A queue with expensive hair and a pale gold mid-winter tan, muffled from neck to ankle in glossy Blackglama mink. A queue whose body language screamed "I am not part of a vulgar gaggle panting to get its hands on a bargain; I simply happen to be standing here, with, admittedly, one or two other people, waiting for admission to an exclusive shoe shop (which I am quite well off enough to patronise outside sale time)." The woman ahead of me turned and half-caught my eye, the tip of her pretty nose, just visible above her mink collar, peony pink with cold. "We must be mad," she said.

Not mad, exactly, but certainly in the grip of an addiction for which, once acquired, there is no cure. Perhaps Manolo Blahnik's sale should carry a health warning — for the instant you step into a pair of his shoes, you are *Never The Same Again*.

To say that Blahnik is a shoemaker is rather like saying that Fragonard used to daub a bit. He is an artist in shoes. His little shop, presided over by his



An artist in shoes: once in the grip of the Manolo Blahnik addiction, there is no cure

formidable sister, Evangeline, has about it the intent, rather severe air of an Old Master's studio. His designs have a quality of fantasy, not unusual in art, but very rare in fashion.

It is the fantasy that fuels the addiction. Blahnik is more or less impervious to the vagaries of fashion and his rare excursions into street style (an outstandingly nasty high-heeled rendition of a Timberland boot springs to mind) tend to be ill-advised. The power of his shoes lies in their ability to inspire the collector's rage to own a beautiful object — and the childish belief that, Cinderella-like, simply by one's slipping on a pair of jewelled satin slippers, or fragile peaty sandals, one's life will be transformed.

Thus, peering in through the shop window on a grey January day, one sees the place full of women in winter overcoats, wobbling on one leg, while attempting to thrust a woolly-stocked foot into a little white leather kitten-heeled pump. What they see reflected in the mirror is not the flushed face, the shiny nose and the thick winter tights with their ludicrous summery floral, but a floaty dress, a balmy evening and that elegant little shoe, its vamp cut just

low enough to show the sexy cleft between the toes. These are shoes that take the upper hand, if you let them. I once walked down High Holborn barefoot in a thunderstorm, carrying my Blahnik court shoes rather than expose them to the rain. At least one pair of evening shoes has been lying in its box for years, waiting for an occasion sufficiently grand to merit a wearing. And oh, how I mourn the ones that got away. The sandals spangled with crystals that I couldn't afford; the pony-skin mules that I allowed my then boyfriend to talk me out of; the black velvet boots with scarlet heels that were a fatal half-size too small... They will haunt me until my dying day.

Fifteen years on, my Chelsea days are long gone, but the power of the Blahnik sale continues, unaltered. Here is a suede boot teetering on a three-inch heel, or perhaps a pair of *Legis* heels, courts striped in carnation and ivory. These are shoes for girls who travel everywhere by taxi. But who knows, when I put them on, I might yet find myself transformed into the sort of girl who does so everywhere by taxi...

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Can anyone juggle babies and work?

Having a career can be good for both us and our children, says Nigella Lawson

The term "working mother" is a particularly irritating one. True, it's not as provocative as "career girl", but if anything it is more nonsensical. What mother, after all, does not work?

But it sets us on an interesting path, because bound up in that phrase is the suggestion that only those who go out to work, leaving their children in someone else's care, have it hard. Mothers who stay at home, it is implied, have somehow gone for the soft option. The struggle, the guilt, the torment of the working mother is well-documented. But the so-called non-working mother is either patronised or passed over.

The real truth, the secret that no one wants to admit out loud, even though all my friends — working mothers almost to a girl — own up to among ourselves, is that it is considerably easier to be a working mother who employs a nanny than a non-working mother who does it all herself. I mention the word nanny, notwithstanding the accusations of middle-class elitism it will undoubtedly, sedulously engender. For this is a middle-class issue.

Working-class mothers have always had to work — no choice there at all — and don't have time for the angst-ridden self-justifications of their professional sisters. But it is the demands of middle-class life that have changed: it can no longer be maintained on a single income, even a relatively good one, or not in London. Nevertheless, the wife who wants to be at home with her young, in rather more precisely, that I preferred to be with them, as long as I could do some work as well and have someone to look after them while I was doing so. This, I consider, is the choicest option, though one with limited availability.

I did not say young children, whose mothers went out to work were disadvantaged (although I sometimes think those mothers are) but it is idiotic for anyone to insist they're not. The point is, they are both disadvantaged and advantaged. There are problems and rewards ensuing from going out to work and staying home.

I have to say, speaking as a daughter of a mother who did not go out to work, I don't think staying home is necessarily the answer. True, in my mother's day, women like her who didn't work didn't necessarily spend much time with their children either. And I do think that giving up work can breed enormous resentments and tensions in women who are not suited to playing the domestic card without respite. I notice among my friends that those who are most dedicated to working hard, long hours at all costs are those whose own mothers so pointedly sacrificed their own careers for the sake of their family. Unfortunately the family often grows up to resent being the un-



The toughest act of them all — to survive economically, many women struggle to keep a balance between work and motherhood

Rise of the maternal girl

Mothers are being appreciated by employers at last, says Anjana Ahuja

A child is more likely to develop a happy, inquisitive and secure personality if its mother has stayed at home for the first two years of its life, according to child psychologists. This poses a conundrum. Maternity leave is usually only a few months, meaning women wanting to devote more time to their families have to leave work. But in a competitive world, jobs are precious. And for high-flyers the wrench between a career and full-time motherhood can seem even more painful. There is no guarantee that the same job will be available, and, worse, resuming work could mean a lower-paid position.

Fortunately, change is afoot. One in three workers is a woman with a family, and many occupy senior managerial positions. As a result, companies are beginning to accept that a valued female employee does not lose her skills when she takes time out for her family.

"Many firms are realising that they have to be more flexible if they want to retain good people," says Stefan Stern, from the Industrial Society. "The high street banks are prime examples. They have shed so many staff through downsizing that they are anxious to hang on to the people who are left."

Some firms arrange for employees to return for short periods to keep in touch with changes. Once they return, workplace nurseries make it easier for women to harmonise family and working roles. Breaks are not exclusively for women, nor for workers with children. "Some companies are very understanding if a person wants to take, say, 18 months off to go travelling, learn a language, or undergo self-development in some other way," Stern says.

Some mothers may have given up working with the intention of never returning. But when children fly the nest, there is a strong temptation to seek fulfilment elsewhere. This means many women in their forties and fifties braving an unfamiliar jobs market.

This is where organisations such as the Women Returners' Network come in. WRN is a London-based organisation, which has set up courses to update skills.

"The number of obstacles make it extremely difficult for women to return to work," says Ruth Michaels, the director. However, there is light amid the gloom — four out of five women who attend its 15-week course at Westminster University find work in three months.

Karin Mackenzie, 39, from north London, is one. Formerly a nurse, then a bookshop manager, she stopped full-time work with the birth of her first son in 1987. During the past ten years, she worked from home as a knitwear designer and a charity administrator.

"I was pushing 40 and felt it was time to do something serious," she says. "I didn't have any idea about formal interview techniques or writing a CV. The course taught me all that, and introduced me to information technology, which I really enjoyed. We even had a makeover with a colour consultant. I couldn't believe the difference appearance could make." The tuition must have worked. She landed the first job she applied for — training staff at an NHS Trust to use a computer database.



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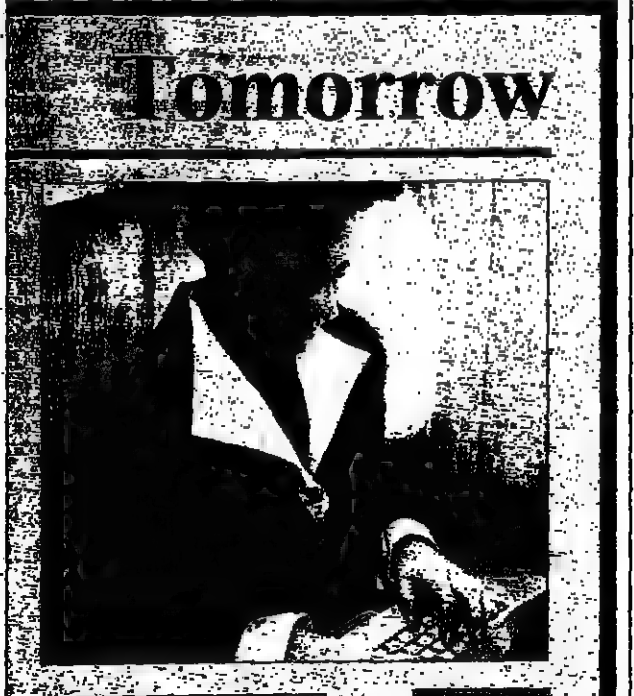
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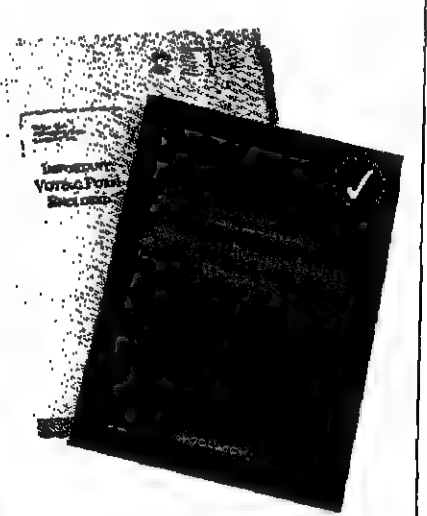
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Alan Coren



Let us pray that John Major has not shot himself in the fin

I tap the keys, this Tuesday dusk, in fear and trembling. For I love the man this side of the Atlantic, and even, perhaps, that side, too, which is why, as the types of John Major's homecoming jet squeal against a grateful nation's tarmac, I pray that in his Pakistani absence things have not gone belly-up for him. We have had quite enough of that already.

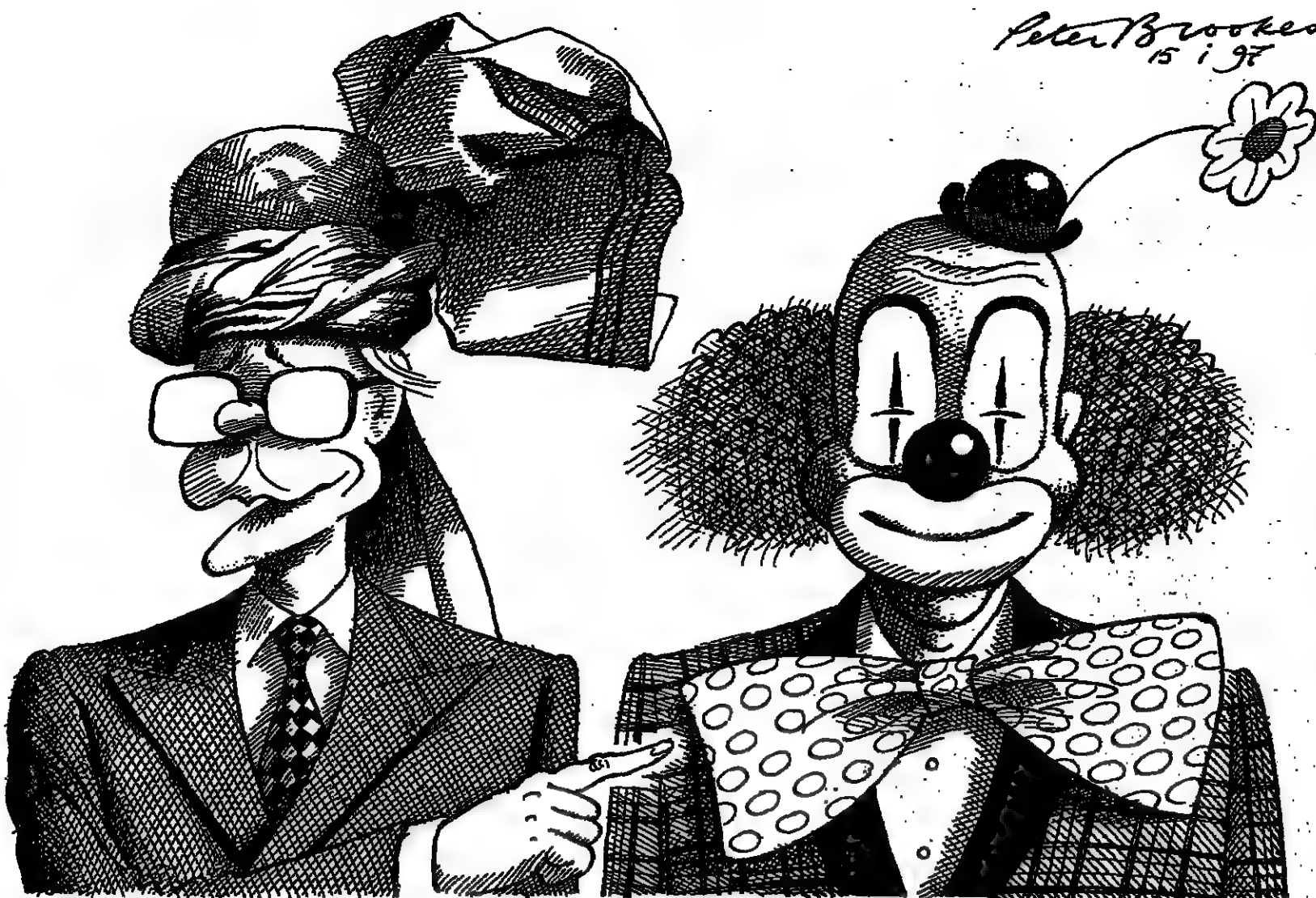
The things will, I'm sure, be at the forefront of his own concern. I feel certain that the first phone call he rushes to make, as Norma waits for their baggage by the carousel, praying that the souvenir vashmak in which she plans to trip, blessedly incognito, to her local Safeway, has not been too badly creased in transit, will be to the men looking after his things. How can I feel so certain of this? Because of the news revealed in last Friday's *Times* that, during the icy weather, the two coppers who live in a hut in the Majors' trim Huntingdonshire garden were required to run from it with saucers of hot water. What they were required to run to was the garden pond, there to empty their saucers, and run back. As often as necessary. Because, all their other custodial duties notwithstanding, they are also members of the Serious Fish Squad: when, in freezes, our leader is away from home, his bodyguard is charged not merely with ensuring that he has turned the gas off and told the milkman, but also with keeping his goldfish warm. The PM, we read, always leaves a stern note to that effect (doubtless underlining it three times with his special red ballpoint) for he cares deeply not only about you and me but also about his finlir constituents. He does not want to come back from doing a bit of leading to find his pond looking like a fishmonger's slab.

But as all too often with John's policies, what we are looking at here is a dodgy conflation of the worthy, the sentimental, and the utterly misguided. That it is worthy speaks for itself. That it is sentimental is spoken for by every long-shadowed village batsman, every cheery Rudge-peddling midwife, every side-whiskered pub landlord pulling warm bitter beneath his martin-wintering dunce, citizens all of John's other Eden: we can be sure that, over the past few days, after the Majors have trudged wearily back from one ceremonial wing-ding after another, tugged off the evening, unclipped the bow, John has strolled in his socks to the window, gazed up at the Islamic moon, and thought of that same English lawn where, between hut and pond, two honest British bobbies in sturdy hob-nailed boots are running back and forth with brimming saucers.

That they will be doing it all night brings me to the bit I speak for, which is the utterly misguided bit. For, caring though it may appear, pouring hot water on a frozen fishpond is the worst thing you can do to it: if the water is thicker than boiling, it will merely form yet thicker ice; and if it is boiling, while it might, admittedly, drill a small hole in the ice, the sudden change in local temperature will either shock to death any fish which has swum up to see what all the commotion is about, or, no less likely, poach it on the spot. Either way, we are looking at a belly-up situation of the first water.

That is why I tremble so for our Prime Minister. If this tragedy has indeed occurred, when word of it gets out — as word, in an election year, always does — he will be in deep trouble. Paddy Ashdown, trained by the SBS in ad hoc survival, will tell Jeremy Paxman that what Major should have done was leave a ping-pong ball in the pond, so creating a permanent air-vent, any fool knows that, while Tony Blair will apprise John Humphrys of a titchy immersion heater, as used to warm an individual mug of cocoa in the Fettes dorm, only £14.99, run a cable out from the house, and Bob's your guppie. And without draining, both will of course observe, over-pressed and under-funded police resources.

That is why I tremble for John tonight. You know about the British and poor dumb animals, if anything out there has indeed gone belly-up, then all his electoral aspirations could soon be reduced to little more than, in Dr Spooner's imperishable words, a half-warmed fish.



"... AND THIS IS MY PAIR."

In praise of the second class

If admissions policy is reduced to the mechanically meritocratic, Oxbridge colleges will lose their raison d'être

I did not gain a first. A mind-blowing final month of work was not enough. A lesson was learnt and I missed the badge of honour so precious to scholars and so disregarded by everyone else. Had I succeeded I would not be writing this column. A first meant a postgraduate studentship and the initiation rite to an academic career. A first was the Magic Flute that would grant Sarastro's protection from the horrors of the World Outside. It was not to be. I left Oxford and looked towards other horizons.

Since then nobody has ever asked the class of my degree. It means nothing to any job I know, other than that of academic. A first is a notoriously bad predictor of success in later life. Time was when the best undergraduates would excel in the professions and the Empire. Now most firsts are gobbled up by the university system. Other degree classes are all but obsolete. The fourth has gone and the third is being replaced by that absurd euphemism, a "lower second". Only the first comes with a quality guarantee, from academics eager to control their professional intake. An institution always honours those it wants to keep for its own. The monks of Ampleforth used to select as prefects the boys they thought would make the best monks.

Hence the current *Times* correspondence on Oxbridge admissions. A letter from Anthony Lejeune yesterday protested about Oxford and Cambridge colleges treating academic merit as the sole basis for admissions. By doing so they ignore family background and other criteria for collegiality. Colleges, he said, should aim at "creating a community where new entrants will be lifelong members and where young people will grow up, make friends and learn much more than appears on any lecture list." For this, says Mr Lejeune, family and school connections are relevant. And, he might have added, A-level performance is not a sufficient or even necessary condition for performing well in a college community.

Such remarks will send admissions tutors screaming under the nearest pillow. Oxbridge has for decades been indoctrinating itself with the idea that academic merit alone should dictate admission, so it can avoid the charge of social bias. Merit should be determined by a test, and that test should not be peculiar to one college or university. Even interviews are suspect: he would make a good scum-half, she has dazzling eyes, that name could be worth touching for the new chemistry lab.

Such thoughts must be put out of mind. They have nothing to do with the case.

The gods of A-level thus serve every purpose. They claim to be blind to class, sex, age or beauty. Whom these gods have blessed, no admissions tutor can deny. Colleges need no longer hazard a judgment as to who might benefit from life within their walls. Like all professions, academics fear that such discretion is a step down the road to discrimination, beyond which lie the courts of law and the horrors of political correctness and ostracism. How much safer to let A-levels take the strain. Let proven merit be king. Leave the admissions tutor a humble courier.

For Oxford and Cambridge this has offered a dream let-out. Nobody could quarrel with A-level results when they are common to every university. The colleges could go on creaming the cream of the nation's sixth forms, and argue that any apparent leaning towards private schools is the fault of the state schools. Their job is not social engineering, nor can they sensibly second-guess the A-level examiners. If an adequate number of pupils present themselves with three A grades at A-level, why run the risk of choosing entrants with anything else? Someone might sue.

Stephen Monsell, a former admissions tutor at Pembroke College, Cambridge, wrote to *The Times* to deny any favouritism to potential donors. "We would like our admissions decisions to be completely blind," he said. They would avoid judgments "other than on academic and personal qualities relevant to performance at university". On this basis, applicants may soon apply to Oxbridge with nothing but a microchip listing their GCSE and A-level marks implanted under their skin. Admissions tutors could be replaced by bar-code scanners.

At which point there is no point in colleges and their paraphernalia of fellows, masters, traditions and endowments. Any institution with the

advantages of Oxbridge should be able to spit and polish an élite pre-packaged and delivered to its door by the A-level examiners. Oxbridge colleges are costly and have long received extra state subsidies. They can easily be reduced to halls of residence. If Oxbridge wants only to be top of the UCCA pile, it may as well disband these mini-monasteries with their petty independencies. They can come closer to the throbbing embrace of Gillian Shepherd's Higher Education Funding Council.

British universities are the most archaic of institutions, an Oxbridge college ostensibly the most archaic of all.

It works for only half the year, making even the British court system seem like Silicon Valley. It obeys medieval seasons, disbanding for seedtime and (long) harvest. Teaching methods are unchanged since Gladstone's day. College governance would be the despair of Erasmus.

Yet the essence of a university, like any human association, is to be more than the sum of its members. An Oxbridge college is a micro-university. Its pre-eminent virtue is in bringing under one roof literally a universe of intellectual callings and characters. It is a truly diverse society. Its duty is therefore not just to select future fellows — that is, potential firsts — but to find students likely to stimulate each other in a semi-closed environment. If it stops doing this, it loses its reason for existing.

Up until the 1960s, this relied on the practice of eccentric admissions, including a skill in recruiting undergraduates with something other than first-class honours potential. Much of Oxbridge's character lay in the tradition of Max Beerbohm and Maurice Bowra, in what would now be called a "comprehensive" university. It ran the intellectual gamut from Nobel prizes to the undergraduate prod from the famous shortest-ever finals paper: "Her subjects wanted Queen Elizabeth to abolish tunnage and

poundage, but the splendid creature stood firm."

Any argument for retaining college discretion over admissions is attacked by liberals as merely a way of entrenching Oxbridge's middle-class past. Three decades of fiercely meritocratic criteria have not brought the working classes to Oxford. The university takes the same proportion of its intake (roughly a half) from the independent sector as it did in the 1970s. If admissions tutors want more state-school pupils, they should admit them, not hide behind the skirts of the A-level exams. I suspect they are hypocrites. Oxford and Cambridge would be happy to sacrifice the bourgeoisie on the altar of merit, so long as they can stay top of the league table. But threaten that status and you can kiss goodbye to favouring the proletariat.

For the moment, Oxbridge can have its cake and eat it. It can be class-blind, meritocratic and powerful all at the same time. I wonder for how much longer. College finances are in a parlous state. Unless the colleges promote their individual diversity — including eccentric admissions — they will not attract the endowments they desperately need as government withdraws its subsidies. The splendid edifice may start to crumble as privatisation creeps up on it.

There will be many a delicious irony. I suspect that places for the fee-paying students will bring more offspring of working-class parents than today's meritocracy. Colleges may even come forward to reverse the uniformity of Oxbridge gender co-education, which has deprived the two universities of their idiosyncrasy (saving a brave handful of female bastards). Colleges may then seriously try to balance such an intake with pupils from genuinely deprived backgrounds, rather than the present cosmetic scurry round "good comprehensives". Admissions tutors will have to start working again. Academic superiority may suffer, but in a good cause — that of a well-rounded university.

You cannot staff a living institution with a barren test of past merit. No company or newspaper or partnership would survive that way. Those choosing members of a proper college cannot delegate their professional judgment to a mechanical test. They are choosing a team. The best teams are chosen with a touch of inspiration and an inclination to gamble. Oxbridge is thus a microcosm of every professional institution in this age of standardisation. It either fights for its freedoms and shoulders its responsibilities, or it says goodbye to its common purpose.

Who shall 'scape whipping?

Julian Critchley
on the cruelties of
Commons pairing

Since Eric Heffer died of cancer, I have been without a regular parliamentary pair, but then I have not needed one. For I have been "in dock" since 1992, suffering from post-polio syndrome, for which I receive a disability allowance. I also have prostate cancer.

The public does not really know what "pairing" means. It has no sexual connotations. It is simply a device whereby two MPs, one Labour and one Conservative, seek the permission of their whips' offices and agree to be absent, a manoeuvre which makes no difference to the result of any vote.

I listened to PM last night to hear Joe Ashton, the Labour MP, usually an amiable fellow, boast that in order to keep Jim Callaghan in office in the late 1970s, six Labour MPs had met their death in the line of duty.

Donald Dewar, the Labour chief whip, has banned all pairing on the ground that the Tory whips "cheated" in the fishing vote before Christmas. I voted with the Government, but bear no responsibility for whatever antics our whips' office may have got up to. But I, and others in far worse health than me, are to bear the consequences.

Since 1992, I have voted rarely in person. I can manage a 7pm vote, but at 10pm when the majority of divisions take place, I have been "nodded through". This arcane process means that MPs drive into New Palace Yard and park with ministerial cars at 9.45pm and wait to be checked by a Labour and a Conservative whip. We are then waved cheerfully on our way.

On one occasion since the last election, my car was parked behind an ambulance which had borne a Labour MP from the cancer ward of some hospital in Yorkshire, where he had only recently undergone an operation. He died shortly afterwards. He might have been paired with me, and I would have been saved a good deal of discomfort, and he a great deal of pain.

On another occasion, when I was being "nodded through" at ten o'clock, I noticed in front of me a London taxi cab inside which was Mrs Jo Richardson, MP, apparently wired up to some electrical/medical apparatus. The Labour whip who came down to check me through said "She'll soon be dead," and indeed she soon was. She, too, poor woman, might have been left in peace.

Although on crutches, I count as "walking wounded". I suffer from no life-threatening disease, although a course of radiotherapy in the summer of 1993 knocked the stuffing out of me. I have sat in some discomfort in my car, having been driven from Ludlow at our whips' behest, and by so doing voted either on a vote of no confidence, or in order to thwart the Eurosceptics. I was happy to do so.

The Government chief whip, Alastair Goodlad, who looks rather like Jeffrey Archer's butler, has been very decent to me. So was Richard Ryder. The Tory whips' office was once manned exclusively by gentlemen (this is no longer quite the case, but then the Tory party has changed since I was first elected in 1959). When they rebuke a Tory MP for some misdemeanour, their language is so understated as frequently to be misunderstood.

The Labour whips' office, on the other hand, has more in common with a sergeant's mess. They eff and blind with the best of them. Does this go some way to explaining the callousness with which they have treated their own sick and wounded in the past? There is such a thing as carrying party loyalty too far.

I think what I have written does serve, not only to explain to an unheeding public what pairing is, but to point to the rumbling that is so characteristic of Donald Dewar's not-so-mercy men. I did not vote last night on the Finance Bill. I was paired, either with a Labour MP who shall be nameless (he is gravely ill), or, and this is much more likely, with an Ulster Protestant who preferred to stay up the Shankill Road. But I expect to be "nodded through" several more times before the election is finally called. Sir Julian is Conservative MP for Aldershot. Owing to ill-health he will not be standing at the election.

Another Miss

PUBLIC humiliation stalks President Clinton yet again with news that he has been forced to bring his State of the Union Address forward to make way for the Miss USA pageant on television. It is as if the State Opening of Parliament had been rescheduled for a rollover draw of the National Lottery.



Miss USA 1996

The State of the Union is the occasion on which the President outlines his plans for the year in a televised address to the joint Houses of Congress. This year, it was planned for 5 February. Calls, however, went through to the White House from CBS, the television network, which said it was contractually obliged to show the Miss USA pageant from Louisiana. The President would either have to find another day or be bumped off the schedule altogether.

It was no contest: the dignity of the presidency v television exposure. Exposure won and the White House agreed to move the speech to February 4. So now those eclectic viewers to whom both pageants appeal can see the President's earnest, suined, ramblings on one night and the bikini-fest the next.

Michael Jackson, the peculiar singer, is never one to hide his emotions. On his recent world tour, he leant over to a security guard to ask what he was eating.

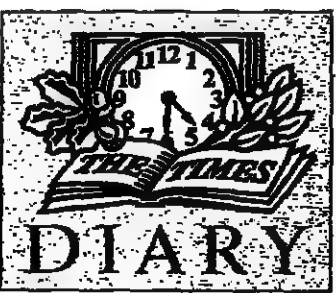
When the guard replied that he was eating veal, Jackson asked: "What's that?" On being told that it was baby calf, the icon burst into tears.

Pox-wallah

OTHER than the milliner who placed that ludicrous hat on John Major's head, the hero of the PM's trip to the sub-continent has been his PPS in the Upper House, Lord



'Kindly stop referring to me as ref', Mr Fashanu



McColl of Dulwich. Ever at Mr Major's beck, McColl has been acting as the flying doctor for the travelling retinue of Downing Street, businessmen and press.

McColl is Professor of Surgery at the University of London, and regularly operates at Guy's Hospital. Much of his trip to the Khyber Pass has been spent with dispensing remedies to Major's retinue. Delhi belly has hit hard.

No more of those Prince of Darkness tags for Tristan Garel-Jones, Conservative MP for Watford, and the man who sluggedhammered the Maastricht Bill through Parliament. He has written a piece in defence of the Royal Family for *Hellol* magazine. Presumably, they pay better than the more earnest

journals. A man of the widest cultural reference, Garel-Jones manages in just one paragraph to squeeze in mentions of Abraham Lincoln, de Tocqueville and Morecambe and Wise.

Garden tops

SHEAR-CLATTERING news for the shrub-pruners at the Chelsea Flower Show: Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother has given her name to a lily.



Still blooming, Ma'am

Her Majesty has agreed to lend her title to a miniature *Alstroemeria* lily to be launched at the show in May, and has indicated that she hopes to attend the launch ceremony herself.

Peter Smith, a nurseryman from Worthing who bred the lily and supplies flowers to royal households, believes his coup is unprecedented — although other flowers have been named after Queen Elizabeth. "It's the highlight of my career," he cries. "She is actually going to come along and give her name to it. We've already had a Princess Alice lily and a Princess Alexandra. And next year it will be a Princess Margaret."

Dog days

DRASTIC measures are in order for Chris Patten, the Governor of Hong Kong, and his high-profile dogs, Whisky and Soda. Patten, who is an admirer of Lady Freewell's campaign to change Britain's quarantine laws, has decided to spend the six months after he returns from the East living in his house in the South of France with the two terriers. His hope is that by then the British laws will have relaxed.



Lavender Patten, with Soda

Patten has been in Britain over the past few days, on what he promises will be his last visit before the election. He insists that the frequency of his recent appearances over here has no connection with the imminence of the election, and prefers to talk of a future sipping chablis over a typewriter. With the yappers by his side, he plans to write the definitive book on the end of colonial Hong Kong.

P.H.S



THE SILENT SECRETARY

Popular protesters in the Balkans still await British support

Malcolm Rifkind is a Foreign Secretary distinguished by his determined early support for the cause of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and the close attention he continues to pay to the region. The Balkans, by contrast, have always seemed to unnerve him, both as Defence Secretary and in his present job.

Caution was his watchword in Bosnia, born of an exaggerated fear that tough words could cost the lives of British troops. No such consideration enters into the drama on Serbia's streets, where a groundswell of democratic outrage appears finally to be forcing President Milosevic to reverse his fraudulent stealing of opposition victories in last November's municipal elections. Yet in public at least, Mr Rifkind has yet to improve on his delicately expressed concern, at the London conference in early December, about press freedom and "other matters relating to the recent elections" in Serbia.

The Foreign Office, proudly pointing to the British Ambassador's easy access to Mr Milosevic, contends that private negotiation is just as important as public pressure. But access in such situations can be purchased at too high a price. The Foreign Office should be less than proud of its statement, after Mr Milosevic bussed his loyalist henchmen into Belgrade in an attempt to turn peaceful protests violent, that "all sides should refrain from acts of provocation". Mr Rifkind cannot be unaware that in dealing with political bosses of the Milosevic stripe, neither private letters nor statements by Foreign Office spokesmen cut much ice.

Megaphone diplomacy has its limitations, but its uses too — and never more so than when a determined people asks no more of the outside world than solid moral backing at the highest political level. What Western European statesmen say matters because the demand for "European" standards of democracy is an important ingredient in the

popular ferment now spreading from Serbia to Bulgaria. Within these ex-Communist elites, even the most ruthless must factor this "European" view into their calculations as they struggle to retain control. The leverage thus created should be used to the full.

The West failed to throw its full diplomatic weight into preventing war in Croatia and then in Bosnia, and paid heavily for the failure. It should be all the more aware of the ease with which politics in this combustible region can turn violent. A century ago, Gladstone's eloquence made the late of these European outposts of the crumbling Ottoman Empire a burning political issue in this country. Britain has now been out-Gladstoned even by Hervé de Charette, France's generally grey Foreign Minister, who yesterday demanded the prompt reinstatement of the election results and insisted that "the time when one could cancel elections and ignore the people's will is over in Europe". That is what Mr Rifkind should have been proclaiming from the rooftops, right from the start of the courageous and inventive citizens' protests that have turned Serbia's cities into great public forums.

With the greatest reluctance, Mr Milosevic at last appears resigned to ceding opposition control over Belgrade and Nis, Serbia's second city. This is only a tactical retreat, using legal shinkiescreens to blur the contours of each concession and thus deny his opponents a clear-cut political triumph. But people will not be fooled; once it is confirmed that he has given way, they will see their way to prising wide open the cracked edifice of his police state. Success in Belgrade will hasten the departure of Bulgaria's Socialists, who have forfeited their democratic mandate by their incontinent and corrupt misrule. It is the moment to pile on external pressure. The Foreign Secretary's first speech on these dramatic events is awaited.

PARTNERSHIP FOR GOOD

The Prince and Mrs Lawrence are natural allies

After Birmingham's ugly jeers, a voice of reason has been raised in defence of the Prince of Wales and his works. While a superficial debate about the succession has occupied TV producers, the Prince, through his Trust, has concentrated himself with quiet work which reaches those whose plight is never likely to attract the cameras.

It is wholly appropriate that Frances Lawrence should seek to advance her agenda for a re-stitching of civil society through the Trust. It seeks to work with the excluded young whose condition her late husband gave his life to improving. The Trust could provide the ideal vehicle for ensuring that her ethical insights and moral force are grounded in practical expertise.

The Prince's Trust celebrates its 21st anniversary this year with a solid record of success. It helps to present Britain's best face to the world. The highlights of both President Chirac's and Nelson Mandela's recent visits to Britain were Prince's Trust events. The Prince's Youth Business Trust has, without any fanfare to accompany its activities, helped to create 30,000 new companies and 60,000 new jobs. The achievement is all the more impressive given the Prince's direction of its efforts towards the disadvantaged young in neglected urban areas. Although its motivation has been philanthropic, the Trust has been as successful an investor as any commercial concern. The author James Morton has paid tribute to the Prince's efforts in *Investing with the Grand Masters*, arguing that "there is not a venture capitalist trust around today which can top his results over the last ten years".

The spirit of voluntarism which the Trust embodies has succeeded despite the cynicism of some in Westminster. Politicians of Left and Right have a natural tendency

either to stifle, or embrace too tightly, initiatives from outside. The Prince's volunteer schemes, which some in the political classes hoped might wither for want of support, have now proved so successful that parties are clamouring to associate themselves with the Trust's activities. It would be in the best interests of the Trust, the Prince, and a flourishing civil society if politicians were to restrict their involvement to encouragement. The success of the Trust has been built on the enthusiasm of the engaged, not the direction of the conscript.

Politicians should also resist the temptation to enlist the Trust's latest volunteer for their own colours. Mrs Lawrence's campaign has, in the Prime Minister's own words, "struck a chord" and members of his Government, most conspicuously the Home Secretary, have tried to give legislative effect to her aims. Mrs Lawrence's message has also found an answering call from politicians of other parties. But more importantly, it has touched most directly many who consider themselves detached from the political process. Her manifesto cannot be the property of those who will be publishing their own, very different documents, in the coming months. Clumsy attempts by the politically motivated to appropriate her efforts run directly counter to the spirit of honest, earnest principle her words embody.

Unencumbered by false friends and misconceived expectations, the Prince and Mrs Lawrence might achieve a great deal. The work of the Trust has helped Britain to recover its reputation for pioneering social policy and given hope to thousands. The popular momentum for action to renew society articulated by Mrs Lawrence required a vehicle. The Prince's Trust is made for the terrain she wishes to cover.

EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW

Clinton's claim would establish a dubious precedent

As the one branch of American Government immune from the ballot box and television camera, the Supreme Court can normally command dignity and decorum. That capacity may be severely challenged over the next few months by *Clinton v Jones* with its attendant sexual sensationalism. The decision eventually reached may have a profound impact on Bill Clinton's political fortunes, and hence that of many other figures, during his second term.

The central legal issue is whether a serving President can claim immunity from prosecution in civil cases because of the unreasonable burdens such a situation would place on his time. Moreover, would such executive immunity preclude not only the onset of a trial but, as the White House has strongly asserted, the discovery of relevant witnesses and collection of related documentation as well?

This whole affair has produced a plethora of paradox. Conservatives who have historically been sympathetic to a strong presidentialism, and suspicious of sexual harassment allegations, have suddenly seen matters in a different light. Likewise, liberal defenders of the President have sheltered behind arguments first aired by President Nixon during the Watergate era. Meanwhile, feminist organisations, who were in the vanguard of the campaign against Clarence Thomas reaching the Supreme Court, have been curiously quiet concerning Mr Clinton.

At Monday's formal hearing the nine justices finally had their chance to cross-examine both sets of lawyers. Those lively exchanges suggest that a unanimous judgment is unlikely. The Clinton contention that the Oval Office could be paralysed by politically motivated lawsuits was — rightly — accorded respect. However, at least some on the bench were clearly disturbed by the novel and sweeping doctrine of White House immunity being requested.

So they should be. It would establish the precedent that no President could ever be sued in a civil case, even when the purported offence occurred before the oath of office was administered and when the putative incident was unrelated to official duties. If those acting for Mrs Jones cannot even start to collect evidence until the year 2001, it is difficult to believe that their client will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage.

The better interests of justice demand that depositions be taken and a trial judge now be appointed. That person should exercise the utmost sensitivity in the scheduling of legal action, accepting delay if there are indeed compelling demands on the President, proceeding if there are not. On Monday, Mr Clinton will again pledge to "protect, preserve, and defend the Constitution of the United States". That document boldly states that all Americans stand as equals before the law. Mr Clinton's claim appears incompatible with this noble principle.

Britain's goals on joining Market

From Professor Lord Beloff, FBA

Sir, Suppose in 1961 Harold Macmillan and Edward Heath, in opening Britain's first bid to join what we called the "Common Market", had said to the British people:

"We are asking you to embark on a venture which will end up before the end of the century with Britain becoming a province in the European federation of 'super-states'; many of your laws will emanate from outside your own borders, and the validity of those passed by Parliament will be decided by a court in which you will have one voice among many; and suppose that policies dreamed up elsewhere could ruin the livelihoods of many of your fellow citizens."

Does Dr John Campbell ("Did Heath deceive Britain over Europe?", January 11) or anyone else think that the answer would have been other than a resounding "no"?

When last year I finished my book *Britain and European Union: Dialogue of the Deaf* I was uncertain whether those who brought the country to its present predicament were themselves misled or whether, intentionally or otherwise, they deceived others.

My view that there was a positive intention on the part of the makers of policy to secure Britain's participation in such a structure is, I think, demonstrated in the November 23, 1996, *Economist* article by Sir Nicholas Henderson, and the long review of books on Europe by Quentin Davies, MP, in *The Times Literary Supplement* of January 3, 1997.

It now seems to me to be the case that a section of the British elite were so pessimistic about this country's capacity to perform as a successful nation state that they were determined to bring about the alternative: its submergence in a supranational entity. At no point did the desires of the mass of their fellow citizens appear to influence them. The arrogance of it.

Yours truly,
BELOFF,
House of Lords,
January 11.

From Mr Richard Buttrey

Sir, Dr John Campbell is incorrect when he says, "No one could claim at the time of the 1975 referendum that the goal of monetary union had not been spelt out."

I quote from Harold Wilson's pamphlet, *Britain's New Deal in Europe*, issued to every household in advance of the referendum: "There was a threat to employment in Britain from the movement in the Common Market towards an Economic and Monetary Union. This threat could have forced us to accept fixed exchange rates for the pound, restricting industrial growth and so putting jobs at risk. This threat has been removed."

Those last five words were clearly meant to indicate that monetary union had been rejected.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD BUTTREY,
6 Marlborough Crescent,
Grappenhall,
Nr Warrington, Cheshire,
January 11.

From Mr Peter Gardner

Sir, Dr John Campbell's article contains the weakest argument I have ever seen and merely proves that the original charge is correct. He says that Sir Edward Heath "never disguised that his conception of Europe was a political community" and confirms that in October 1972 he, Pompidou and Brandt "agreed to press on with economic and monetary union".

We are probably all familiar with the line in the 1971 White Paper — "there will be no erosion of essential national sovereignty", and the White Paper at the time of the 1975 referendum explicitly said that there were no plans for monetary union.

The charge of deceit is clearly borne out by the facts.

Yours faithfully,
PETER GARDNER
(Prospective parliamentary candidate,
UK Independence Party,
Oxford East),
78 St Marys Road, Oxford,
January 12.

Stressed teachers

From Mrs Danielle Vyse

Sir, The survey comparing British and French teachers, reported by your Health Correspondent on January 9, appears to me to be biased against British teachers.

As a Frenchwoman and a qualified teacher living in England, I know why British teachers are a lot more stressed. Their French counterparts are required to teach, and that is all: no playground and lunch duties, no extra supervision when another teacher is absent, no extra-curricular activities, fewer hours spent teaching, no necessity to stay at school during free periods, generally better pay. Parents, not schools, are blamed for children's bad behaviour.

In the words of my French sister-in-law, who teaches English in a secondary school in France: "Conditions are not the same. There'll be a revolution here if they were imposed on us."

Yours etc,
DANIELLE VYSE,
47 Southbridge Rise,
Crowthorne, East Sussex,
January 9.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

'Crossover' chart hits the right note

From the Reverend J. R. Lowerson

Sir, I believe the conventional term for what you describe as the new "crossover" top 50 chart for classical "easy listening" music (report and leading article, January 7) is "middlebrow".

Alas, since its first use in the 1920s, that solid ascription has been largely pejorative. What it represents has been ignored by most critics, music historians and the new cultural theorists alike, yet it sums up much of British taste. Perhaps the word "middlebrow", with its firm honesty and comfort, seem less dynamic than "crossover", which sounds as if it is trying desperately to be somewhere else.

Yours faithfully,
J. R. LOWERSON
(Reader in History),
University of Sussex,
Centre for Continuing Education,
Education Development Building,
Falmer, Brighton, East Sussex,
January 7.

From the Chief Executive
of the Royal Albert Hall

Sir, Once again we hear high-pitched squealings as the cultural elite shoot themselves in the foot.

The debate over "crossover" music and its status seems to have brought to the fore some of the less palatable, patronising opinions of those who believe that classical art forms, whether in performance or visually, are reserved for either the very rich or those whose vocabulary will remain forever

impermeable. On what basis is it possible for anyone who seeks a place in today's society to complain about the accessibility of music in all its forms to the human race in all its forms? To anyone, anywhere, who is making music that hundreds of thousands, if not millions, can enjoy I say power to your recording.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK DEUCHAR
(Chief Executive),
Royal Albert Hall,
Kensington Gore, SW7,
January 7.

From Dr G. Silverstone

Sir, In your leading article today you again raise the matter of Claudio Abbado's objection to the use of highlights of his Mahler recordings on a single compact disc.

We can only guess what Mahler's own views might have been and can never know how often great symphonists might have felt about propagation of isolated movements. However, it would be of interest to know the feeling of contemporary living symphonists on this matter. How would Sir Malcolm Arnold, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and Sir Michael Tippett feel about the recording of isolated movements from their symphonies on compilation discs?

Yours sincerely,
G. SILVERSTONE,
34 The Avenue, Sale, Cheshire,
January 7.

Books and computers

From Mr David H. Walton

Sir, Simon Jenkins makes a reasoned argument in favour of books against the all-powerful computer (article, January 4; letters, January 11). Some even more powerful arguments are only now starting to appear in the computer world.

Of the favoured storage methods, there are floppy disks with a guaranteed life of no more than a year; archive tape (about five years) and the current CD-Rom (about ten years).

A book printed on quality paper with carbon-based ink might last 1,000 years if stored in the same conditions as computer media.

With the growing storage of large amounts of data on computer system and in tape archives, historians are already starting to have trouble accessing information of only 30 years ago.

The Internet is growing at about 5 per cent per annum according to technical journals, and every additional sign-on puts more strain on the worldwide system. I recently tried to download a large file from a popular site whilst America was awake. My terminal estimated the download time as five hours. In this time I could have taken a train to London, gone to a bookshop or library and read the information I sought.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID H. WALTON,
10 St Guthlac's Close,
Crowland,
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire,
January 5.

From the Head Master
of Worth School

Sir, Worth's experience contradicts Simon Jenkins's hypothesis that books and computers are in opposi-

tion. Book use here has risen markedly since we extended our computer network into the library.

The use of IT motivates students to become researchers and hence more avid readers. This in turn should lead them to become writers and publishers, making their work available to a worldwide audience.

The Internet is indeed of limited use at present, just like the Wright brothers' aeroplane in its time. Yet the Information Highway will be a jet plane by comparison and we must ensure that our schools are part of this cultural revolution.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER JAMISON,
Head Master, Worth School,
Paddockhurst Road,
Turners Hill, Crawley, West Sussex,
January 6.

From Dr Darryl Mead

Sir, Simon Jenkins is too harsh in condemning the Internet. Books have had at least 500 years to perfect the art of delivering an idea, which can be absorbed without outside assistance.

It is unsurprising that the Internet, a potential world library, still has some rough edges at a mere five years of age. Given time, its inventiveness and immediacy will complement the printed book.

A computer hooked to the Internet is vastly more cumbersome than a book, but in a few years most of the books ever printed will be cheaply available through the net, almost irrespective of the readers' location. I look forward to more access to both.

Yours faithfully,
DARRYL MEAD
(Senior Curator, Science),
Museum of Transport, Kelvin Hall,
1 Bunhouse Road, Glasgow,
January 7.

Tiger protection

From Mr Ian MacPhail

Sir, The Young People's Trust for the Environment wrote to Mr Major, prior to his visit to India, asking him to raise the tiger crisis at the highest possible level. We were delighted to read your report, January 10, that he has done this and express our thanks to him.

However, we were dismayed to read in the same report that the UK will be offering £50,000 to groups researching ways to improve conservation while Rame burns. Vast sums have already been spent this way to no effect.

Only vigorous and adequately funded law enforcement will prevent the Indian tiger from becoming the

next dodo. Poachers are killing one tiger per day unpunished.

British conservation charities are already taking eleven-hour action: for instance, Care of the Wild has spent £70,000 in the field, purchasing four-wheel drive vehicles, motorboats, walkie-talkies, etc, and ensuring the wardens are properly clothed and paid. Other charities are following suit.

Our Government must follow their example and ensure that its grant is not frittered on pointless research.

Yours sincerely,
IAN S. MACPAIL
(Chairman of the Board of Trustees),
Young People's Trust for the Environment,
8 Leapole Road, Guildford, Surrey,
January 13.

Not caught napping

From Mrs S. E. King

Sir, When a child I'm sure I was taught that squirrels hibernated.

Why, in the recent cold snap when temperatures have apparently been the lowest recorded for nine years, have the squirrels that live in our loft not only acted as an alarm clock by noisily running up and down the length of the house first thing in the morning, but been seen outside frisking in the snow?

We were relying on them being in a deep sleep so that we could kick them out without contest.

Yours faithfully,
S. KING,
Longfield,
Burne Avenue, Wickford, Essex,
January 10.

Letters to the Editor that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Canonisation of Polish priest

From Sir John Morgan

Sir, I read with great interest Roger Boyes's article and your leader of January 9 on the proposal to canonise Father Popieluszko, the Polish priest murdered by the communists.

I am not a Catholic and cannot comment on potential for miracles, but I wonder whether his posthumous impact on Poland's future might be taken into account.

On November 5, 1984, I was Ambassador in Warsaw and on that day had a visit by the then Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Malcolm Rifkind, and his wife, both of whom had Polish connections. It was the day of Father Popieluszko's funeral and I suggested, with some diffidence, that we might visit the Church of St Stanislaw Kuska on our way back from the airport. To my relief Mr Rifkind agreed. I had left rather exposed as mine had been one of the only two telegrams of condolence that had been read out at the service earlier that day.

Mr and Mrs Rifkind threaded their way through the sea of candles and the impact of their presence was enormous. The communist authorities were furious.

This gesture then became the yardstick by which future visitors from the West were measured. High-level ministerial visitors had to demonstrate their credentials by including paying their respects at what soon became a shrine. The Polish Government made it abundantly clear that any such action was unwelcome. In spite of this every senior visitor from Western Europe made the pilgrimage to the church.

Years later the Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki told me that this act of international recognition had had a most heartening effect on Solidarity's resolve.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MORGAN,
41 Hugh Street, SW1,
January 9.

ENO's future

From the Chairman of the Arts Council of England

Sir, The usually well informed Richard Morrison ("Lottery backlash has flooded ENO", Arts, January 11) suggests that the Arts Council has no strategy for the provision of lyric theatre in London and no view about English National Opera's development plans.

The council has given a great deal of thought to lyric theatre provision for London. Two years ago, a committee led by Denis Stevenson published its report ("Warning note to chill the Coliseum", Arts, January 28, 1995), which has been under constant review and discussion with all the parties concerned, notably ENO.

Mr Morrison is apparently unaware that it would be entirely inappropriate for the Arts Council to make any public comment on ENO's lottery application before it is even submitted. There is no question of the council having "melted away, leaving ENO to face the flak alone". Their lottery application will be fully considered when we receive it, like any other application large or small.

Yours faithfully,
GOWRIE, Chairman,
The Arts Council of England,
14 Great Peter Street, SW1,
January 13.

Labour and the Lords

From Mr I. A. Shapiro

Sir, How far back can Mr Jack Straw trace his ancestry (letters, January 8)? Can he be certain that none of his 17th-century progenitors was illegitimately fathered by Charles II? His Majesty's sexual activities were not restricted to ladies at Court.

Yours etc,
I. A. SHAPIRO,
93 Oakfield Road,
Selly Park, Birmingham.

Ribbons or bows?

From Ms Tracey Knight

Sir, The feminine equivalent of a bow tie (letters, January 3, 9) is surely a pair of earrings. Dr Helen Walters simply needs to acquire several bold and bright pairs.

My earnings have certainly made me "stand out from the crowd". It is, however, debatable whether my acquaintances consider me to be "distinctive, artistic and thoughtful", or simply "tacky, with appalling taste in jewellery".

Is there a market for a range of bow-tie shaped earrings?

Yours faithfully,
TRACEY KNIGHT,
4 Billhurst Cottages,
Plaistow Street, Lingfield, Surrey,
January 3.

From Mr Tony Waterson

Sir, For Dr Helen Walters to achieve her aims of standing out from the crowd and appearing distinctive, artistic and thoughtful she need wear nothing more than a bow tie.

But she may prefer to await warmer weather.

Yours sincerely,
TONY WATERSON,
Hillburn, Patna Road,
Kirkmichael, Ayrshire,
January 3.

In the first of two reports on homeless people, Rachel Kelly looks at the problems they face finding primary healthcare

Passport to a doctor for the homeless

Vagrants who visit hospitals instead of a GP can cost the NHS three times as much

The recent icy weather that has swept Britain has highlighted the fate of the homeless. As if a lack of shelter were not worry enough, a new report tells how the men and women of the road have to struggle to get treatment for the array of medical problems they suffer.

The report, by the housing charity Shelter, says that many people living on the streets are forced to turn to hospitals' accident and emergency departments, because they have difficulty in finding a GP. Such visits cost three times as much as treatment by a family doctor.

Researchers surveyed the 11,873 homeless who visited the accident and emergency department of London's University College Hospital over a year. The cost was £44 a head, compared to £15.49 had they visited a GP. Shelter says that the hospital could have saved £60,000 if homeless people had seen a GP.

Mental illness was the second most common complaint of homeless people attending the department, although in seven out of ten cases the visit was inappropriate because they had apparently had no earlier contact with mental health workers.

Other people with respiratory illness were using the accident and emergency department to obtain prescriptions for their inhalers, a service which should be provided by GPs, the report says.

Chris Holmes, the director of Shelter, says: "This is the result of the difficulties faced by people without a permanent address in finding a doctor who is willing to take them on. They are forced to resort to casualty departments for what is effectively primary healthcare." While the Government's Patient's Charter says that

all people have a right to healthcare, homeless people are, he says, being denied this basic right.

The report recommends reforming the GP system to make it easier for the homeless to register. Only 63 per cent of homeless people in the study are registered, compared with 97 per cent of the wider public. The report also recommends the development of drop-in clinics at set times for those who have difficulty in meeting appointments, and providing GPs in casualty departments.

A British Medical Association spokeswoman says: "The points that Shelter makes about costs are valid, and it is true that everyone should have the right to access to healthcare. But the extra cost of treating the homeless in accident and emergency departments is not as worrying as the fact that the care they get there is not likely to be as appropriate as the long-term continuity provided by a GP."

She adds that doctors specialising in medical care for the homeless believe that there is no reason for GPs to refuse to treat them. This is particularly true for long-term hostel residents.

Dr Nicholas Robinson, who for the past 12 years has been running a clinic for residents at the Thorncliffe Hotel, at Heston, near Hounslow in west London, which is used as a hostel for the homeless, says: "I'll never refuse to see anybody. GPs need to be responsive to these very needy people; doctors are contractually obliged to provide services. It may be slightly more difficult to treat homeless patients, but it only takes a network of sensible local services. This shouldn't be a problem for GPs."

The Thorncliffe Hotel has a clinic in which a doctor and a psychiatric nurse provide "outreach" care for



Dr Simon Ramsden treats a patient at the clinic while others wait. "A lot of homeless people feel awkward about going into surgeries," he says



residents twice a week. Many of the people staying at the hostel are refugees who arrive in Britain at Heathrow, needing sustained medical care. This presents language problems: 50 languages have been encountered. There are also inadequate medical records and too often confusion over the patient's name.

One solution may be the Records Across London Project, in which homeless people are issued with a passport-style health diary containing

medical details for doctors and useful contacts for the patients. At present, 100 health diaries have been issued in a pilot scheme, with plans to issue 10,000 in London this March. Other health authorities throughout Britain are said to be interested.

Simon Kinsey, project co-ordinator, says: "We're hoping that anybody who is mobile and uses more than one clinic or GP will benefit from this scheme. The usual prob-

lem of an administrative backlog won't be there, however quickly the patient moves around. It will also cut down on drug abuse from addicts getting prescriptions from two doctors simultaneously."

The Department of Health is running 28 projects around the country to bring the homeless into primary healthcare, although these have been subject to government cuts, causing six to close in the past year.

However, health officials point out the inevitability of some homeless people using casualty departments. Richard Brunskill, of the Health Department, says: "The best way of addressing the problem is by driving down the number of homeless by bringing them into hostels where they can get primary healthcare."

Next week: how government cuts threaten the homeless

The clinic that helps the down and outs

Patrick Flint has been using the Great Chapel Street Medical Centre, off Oxford Street, for the past six years. Before becoming homeless seven years ago, Flint, 56, from Newcastle, worked for 20 years as a painter and decorator.

Registered as disabled with problems in one leg, he lost his home after an operation prevented him from being able to work. "I came to London from Gateshead for an operation at the Middlesex Hospital," he says. "The day after my operation I was discharged by the hospital and had nowhere to go. I didn't know where to sleep. I spent my first night out on The Strand and I lived on the streets for five years."

During that time he had chronic bronchitis and his leg worsened. At first he had no healthcare at all. He has since made use of the Great Chapel Street clinic. There is no need for registration or booking. Patients need only be sober and non-violent.

Despite these rules, doctors are threatened about once a month and the police have often been called in to make evictions.

"I was lucky to find this place," Mr Flint says. "If you didn't know about it, you'd be lost. Lots of people living on the streets are ill, especially the older ones. We're always hearing about young people having nowhere to go, but people of my age used to have jobs before becoming homeless."

Dr Simon Ramsden, who practises at the clinic, said: "For many of our patients who have found somewhere to live, this place remains preferable to an ordinary doctor's surgery. However welcoming GPs are, a lot of homeless people feel awkward about going into surgeries. And some people, a small minority, are not suitable for registration with a normal GP. A mother with a baby would not tolerate sitting in a waiting room with someone who has infections."

Mr Flint (who asked us not to use his real name) now has a room in a hotel near King's Cross and would like to go back to work but cannot do so because of his disability. "They've been very good to me at this clinic," he says. "I once met Michael Heseltine, who told me to take my pension early. But I'm saving that for after I'm 60."

ARTHUR SNELL

Christine Webb looks at

proposed legal changes to help crofters

A new line of trees planted by crofters in the village of Borve, Skye, to provide shelter for their sheep, will soon quell the bitter east winds that whip across the island.

The trees represent the crofters' newfound faith in the future. They have become their own landlords in 1993 when they formed the Borve and Annishader Township Trust, paying £20,000 for 18 crofts and the sites of the dwellings on them. The 49 acres of native trees they have planted are their first investment.

Now the trust has become a model for the largest crofting landlord in Scotland, Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary. He wants to give his 1,400 croft tenants the chance to set themselves free. In some cases he will even give away the crofts.

Crofting is a unique form of land tenure, created in the last century to give smallholders protection after the Highland Clearances. The Crofters Act of 1886 gave crofters security of tenure, the right to hand the land on to heirs and the right to claim compensation from the landlord for improvements made on the land - including dwellings they build.

Further legislation includes the 1976 Act allowing crofters to buy their land for no more than 15 times the rental value. But there is a snag: once they own their land, crofters lose most of their rights, including the right to use common grazing land. By setting up a trust to buy their crofts, then renting the crofts back from the trust, their rights remain.

Mr Forsyth's landholding, mostly in the West Highlands and Western Isles, was ac-



Crofting is meeting a demand from people escaping the cities or returning to their roots

Why they are queueing for a life on Skye

quired mainly by agreement or compulsory purchase allowed by a 1919 Act, which was designed to provide crofts for returning servicemen.

The Transfer of Crofting Estates (Scotland) Bill, about to enter its committee stage in the House of Lords, allows him to offer ownership of crofts to crofters' trusts. It is described by the Crofters' Commission as a "facilitating tool" for those who want to take up the offer to buy.

Moving the Bill's second reading last November, Lord Lindsay, the Scottish Agriculture Minister, said: "With the

best will in the world, officials employed by a government department cannot be as sensitive to local needs and priorities as those who actually live there." The crofts could be transferred "at no consideration where this is necessary to make sure that the trust gets off to a good start."

Giving land away might appear altruistic, but the Scottish Office gets just £100,000 rent for its 250,000 acres or so of crofting land. The average rent at Borve is £10 a year. This makes crofting such an attractive option that the population of Skye and Lochalsh is

said to have grown by 17 per cent in ten years. Skye's population is about 10,000.

Dr Jim Hunter, the historian and author who helped to set up the Scottish Crofters' Union, says: "Now there is a huge demand for crofts, both from people escaping the cities and from people returning to their roots."

He believes that the Bill's rights should be extended to privately owned crofts. "Sometimes a crofter has more than one croft, leaving him with a surplus house," he says. "The crofter can buy the site the house stands on and sell it on. Such houses can fetch between £50,000 and £90,000."

But he has a word of warning for buyers. "The only cautionary note is that it is not straightforward. Purchasers should ensure that they use a lawyer versed in crofting law. People have bought crofts, thinking they have outright ownership, then realised that the tenant has absolute rights and cannot be removed."

water was excellent and the drainage 'absolutely first class', while a manorial domain in the Grafton country came with 6,700 acres and stabling for 35 horses.

A specially commissioned book looks at the future for the countryside a hundred years hence. Predictions include the bizarre calculation that the average £750,000 country house will cost £250 million, assuming inflation.

A lifetime in the Country

tenant, HRH the Comte de Paris." Advertisements reflected the priorities of the time, says the current editor, Clive Aslet. Prospective tenants of a turreted pile outside Bicester were assured that the

What's your house really worth?

PROPERTY PRICES

For the past several weeks, housing "experts", analysts, economists and estate agents have been busy crystal-ball gazing. Rachel Kelly writes. But beware. These housing Mystic Megs are almost totally misleading if their past records are anything to go by.

The latest headline from Savills was that prices would rise by 50 per cent in the next three years. Yet the same agent said that prices would rise by 1.5 per cent in real terms in 1996, when in fact they rose by about 7 per cent. At the end of 1992, the firm predicted an upturn, three years too early.

One man who deserves to be heard is Simon Agace, chairman of the London agent Winkworth, the only property expert who last year accurately predicted to *The Times* the extent of the boom in property in 1996.

All other forecasters, including the Halifax Building Society, the City broker UBS and other estate agents, underestimated last year's boom, saying rises would reach 2 or 3 per cent.

This year, Mr Agace says that prices are likely to rise by 7 per cent in central London, but by 15 per cent in London's suburbs, including Wandsworth, Streatham Common, Highbury Fields, Tufnell Park and parts of Highgate and Crouch End.

Mr Agace believes prices outside the capital will rise by about 10 per cent. "Prices outside London still have some catching up to do," he says. "But some of the better residential areas of London, such as Notting Hill and Kensington, have already seen such good rises that buyers will resist any more similar rises."

"In the London area, the volume of houses for sale decreased in 1996. Many homeowners decided not to sell before 1997 because they anticipated further price rises. The wide gulf between supply and demand has created artificial price rises," Mr Agace says that the exception in prime central London will be Islington, where houses are historically undervalued. Prices there will rise by 15 per cent.

All forecasters agree that the market is likely to slow in

terms of the numbers of sales because of uncertainty about the general election result. Thereafter, if Labour wins, interest rates are expected by

analysts to rise to control the prospect of higher inflation. This, in turn, is likely to hit the housing market and slow any further price rises.

But Willie Gething, of the buying agency Property Vision, says: "We expect growth to continue over the next 12 months. In real terms, prices are still way below their peak of the late 1980s so there is room for further growth."

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THE TIMES

CAREER GUIDE

TOKEN 3

CHANGING TIMES

THE centenary edition of *Country Life* comes out tomorrow, complete with a facsimile of the magazine from 1897, a time when it used to display its property ads on the cover (Rachel Kelly writes).

The first issue included the fact that Stowe House, Buckingham, "the stately ancestral home of the Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos", was to let, "in consequence of the death of the late

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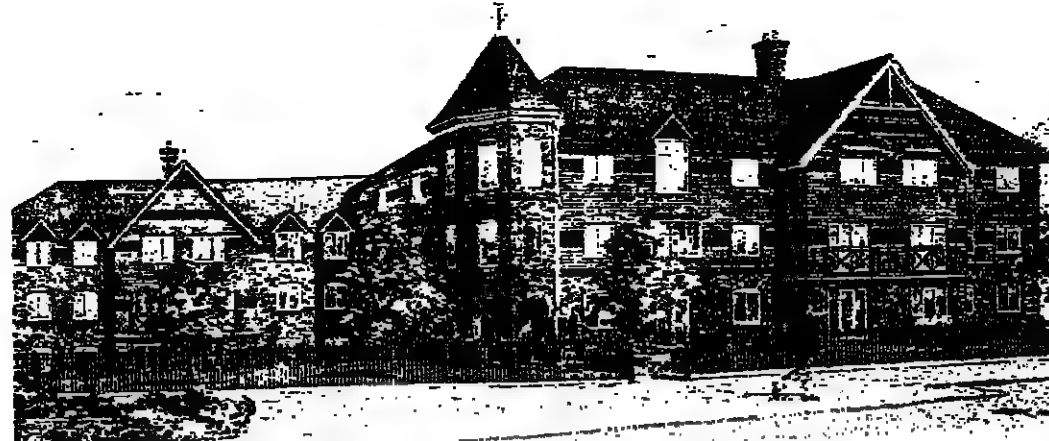
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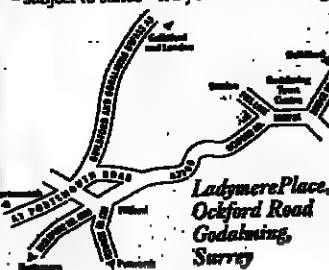
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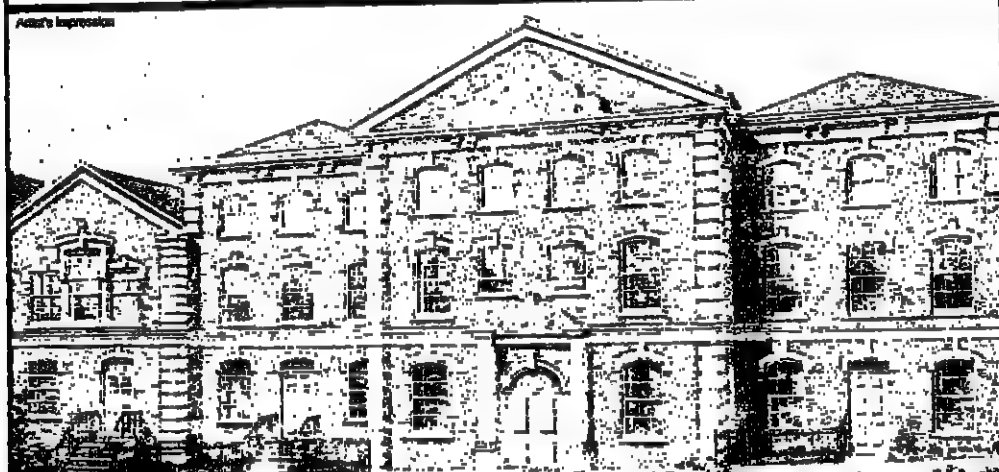


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INSIDE
SECTION
2
TODAY



MEDIA
Hello, Hello,
the gossip
battle hots up
PAGES 32, 33



ARTS
Wanted: a new
life for the Public
Record Office
PAGES 34-36



SPORT
Dalglish steps back
into spotlight as
Newcastle manager
PAGES 42-48

**TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
PAGES
46, 47**

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15 1997

Optimism on rates feeds market fever

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

SHARES raced to a record high yesterday on hopes that the Chancellor, armed with figures showing subdued inflationary pressures and a disappointing Christmas shopping season, will stand firm against calls for higher interest rates when he meets the Bank of England today.

The FT-SE 100 index of leading shares rallied strongly for the second successive day yesterday, piling on 60.9 points to close at a record 4,168.2. The buying came on renewed optimism about the outlook for base rates. A Reuters poll of 20 economists late last week found that 12 expected interest rates to stay at 5 per cent after today's monthly monetary meeting,

with eight expecting the Chancellor to concede a quarter-point increase.

Optimism on the outlook for rates was reinforced yesterday by news of a lower than expected rise in American consumer prices, which went some way to allaying fears of rising US interest rates and provoked another rally on Wall Street.

However, the economic news on the eve of today's key monetary meeting did not all go Kenneth Clarke's way with the publication yesterday of a report by the influential Treasury Select Committee that was highly critical of his Budget arithmetic.

The Treasury report served to highlight some of the more optimistic assumptions of the Budget, and may strengthen the Bank of England's hand today in looking for a rate increase that it believes must come sooner or later if the Government is to hit its inflation target. A genuinely tight Budget package should, in theory, have lessened the need for a monetary squeeze.

The committee was deeply sceptical about the Government's assumption of low inflation combined with economic growth, its assumption of big savings from its "Spend to Save" programme of cracking down on benefit fraud, and its forecasts for public spending as a whole.

The report noted that the Government had been able to limit planned public spending in the short term by arranging one-off inflows of money from the sale of Armed Forces' married quarters and the su-

dent loan book. But this left spending plans more difficult to hit in future years.

Despite the critical tone of this report, the City's attention will be trained on today's monetary meeting. It does not start until mid-afternoon so any change in rates would not be announced until tomorrow.

Whether a rate rise is agreed today, the City is still expecting a modest monetary tightening in the months ahead. Sterling futures traded on the Life market are discounting a half-point increase in rates by September.

However, a recent clutch of British data suggest that, while the economy continues to display healthy growth, there is little sign of a consumer boom running out of control, and the news on inflation has been good. This should limit the need for anything but a modest rise in rates in the months ahead.

The most recent survey by the Confederation of British Industry showed that Christmas sales had been disappointing and the British Retail Consortium described the festive shopping season as nail-biting for retailers. The BRC said that price competition was still fierce and that there was no justification for a rise in interest rates.

This came on top of an unexpected decline in British manufacturing output in November as exporters suffered from sterling's strong appreciation, and another set of very subdued producer prices figures for December.

Pensington, page 27

Morgan Grenfell suspends Horlick

By ROBERT MILLER
BANKING CORRESPONDENT



Nicola Horlick is believed to have held talks with a view to joining ABN Amro

FRESH controversy yesterday engulfed Morgan Grenfell, the troubled fund manager owned by Deutsche Bank, when it suspended the head of its £18 billion UK pensions fund business.

The surprise move to suspend Nicola Horlick, 35, pending an internal investigation that will "look at a potential breach of contract" follows the sacking last September of Peter Young, Morgan Grenfell's star unit trust manager, over trading irregularities in two European funds.

A spokesman for Deutsche Morgan Grenfell said: "This has nothing to do with the Peter Young affair nor is there any suggestion of financial impropriety."

It is understood that Ms Horlick, who last year is believed to have earned £1.5 million, was in talks to join ABN Amro. At the weekend, senior managers at Morgan Grenfell are said to have become concerned that up to 12 members of Ms Horlick's team might consider joining her if she were to leave.

ABN Amro, which wants to beef up its asset management arm in London, declined to comment. City insiders believe that while the Dutch bank has held talks with Ms Horlick, who has juggled her high-flying career with looking after a family of five children, no final offer has been made.

Imro, the watchdog for fund managers is conducting its own investigation into the Peter Young affair, which is also the subject of a Serious Fraud Office probe. Imro said of yesterday's suspension: "This is unconnected with the Peter Young affair and is not a regulatory matter."

Ms Horlick's husband Tim left Kleinwort Benson last year to join Salomon Brothers as head of corporate finance and investment banking. Kleinwort initially sought, but later dropped, a court injunction seeking to prevent the departure of key clients and staff.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	4168.2	(+60.9)
Yield	3.74%	
FTSE All Share	2042.56	(+24.45)
Nikkei	18082.13	(-25.66)
New York		
Dow Jones	6747.87	(+32.48)
S&P Composite	766.88	(+7.17)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	98 1/4%	(98 1/4%)
Yield	6.75%	(6.88%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Libor long g/h		
future (Mar)	105%	(105 1/2%)
STERLING		
New York		
\$	1.6700	(1.6755)
London		
\$	1.6690	(1.6882)
DM	2.6290	(2.6214)
FF	3.977	(3.9458)
SFR	2.2977	(2.3004)
Yen	195.06	(194.05)
S index	99.5	(99.3)
DOLLAR		
London		
\$	1.5943	(1.5987)
DM	2.3830	(2.3656)
SFR	1.5782	(1.5759)
Yen	116.35	(116.48)
Tokyo close Yen	116.38	
NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Mar)	\$23.00	(\$23.10)
GOLD		
London close	\$357.45	(\$358.05)
* denotes midday trading price		

Buoyant

Applications to build houses rose 30 per cent in the final quarter of last year according to the National House Building Council, a further sign of a strengthening housing market.

Bubbling up

Shares in Matthew Clark, the troubled drinks company, rose 10 per cent yesterday as the stock market reacted favourably to the company's plans for recovery.

Saints blessed in early trading

By ALAN DAIR MURRAY

THE Saints went marching in to the Stock Exchange yesterday with shares in Southampton Football Club's new holding company rising sharply on the first day's trading. This followed the reverse takeover by Secure Retirement, a property company.

Shares in Secure, now renamed Southampton Leisure Holdings, closed at 150p, having at one stage touched 175p, valuing the club at £40.5 million. Secure shares were suspended at 46p in December to allow the reverse takeover to proceed with the company's original offer valuing the club at £8 million.

The club seeks to raise money towards its £35 million stadium, which should be built before the end of the decade. No new money was raised yesterday.

The appointment of Kenny Dalglish as Newcastle United manager last night put the flotation of the club back on course. It had intended to launch the float tomorrow but the resignation of Kevin Keegan had put this in doubt. The club would not comment on the timetable but it is expected to reassess the City of its plans at the earliest opportunity.

Charlton Athletic, the Nationwide Division One team, became the latest club to announce its intention to join the stock market. The club is seeking a listing on the Alternative Investment Market, valued at between £10 million and £20 million.

Shareholders in Conrad yesterday agreed the £10 million takeover of Sheffield United. Trading will resume in the company tomorrow at the offer price of 60p with the company seeking to raise £12.5 million from a rights issue.

National Express chief resigns

By JASON NISSE

THE chief executive of National Express, the bus company rapidly expanding into railways, airports and motorway services, resigned yesterday after only five months in the post. The departure of Ernest Patterson was put down to "cultural differences".

Mr Patterson, who spent 30 years at BET before departing after it was bought by Rentokil, is set to receive a payout of £250,000. He had a similar payoff when he left BET.

His place is taken by Phil White, former head of West Midlands Transport, which National Express bought 18 months ago. Mr White was scheduled to become chief executive after the retirement of Ray McEnhill in the summer because of ill-health. But at the last minute, Spencer Stuart, the headhunter, said Mr Patterson was available.

National Express said it that would be contacting Spencer Stuart to see if there would be a refund on the fee paid to find Mr Patterson.

Colin Child, National Express's finance director, denied there had been any disagreement about the group's acquisition strategy. This includes a £370 million

offer for Welcome Break, the motorway services business being sold by Granada, a renewed offer for Birmingham airport, and a place on the shortlist for three new rail franchises, ScotRail, Central Trains and North London Trains.

Mr Child said: "The difference was on cultural type issues. We are quite nimble on our feet whereas Ernest was used to the BET attitude of, if you have a large decision, you put a team of people on it and they come back in a month with a report."

Pensington, page 27



Patterson: £250,000 payout

BA confident of American link-up

By JON ASHWORTH

BOB AYLING, chief executive of British Airways, yesterday insisted the planned alliance with American Airlines would go ahead, in spite of signs of a deepening rift between London and Brussels.

Mr Ayling said Karel van Mieri, the European Competition Commissioner, was wrong in suggesting that a combined BA/American would substantially restrict competition between America and the UK. Mr van Mieri has outlined his fears in a letter to Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade.

His remarks have raised questions about who ultimately will have the say on whether the alliance is approved. Mr van Mieri said the European Commission would take Britain to the European Court of Justice if it nodded the deal through. However, under European law, the final say appears to rest with the relevant regulatory authority - in this case, the Department of Trade and Industry, working with the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

Mr Ayling said BA and American had made it clear that their plans were entirely conditional on a new open

skies agreement between the UK and America. Officials meet in Washington for the next round of talks next month. Interviewed on BBC Radio 4, Mr Ayling said: "We believe that this agreement will be pro-competitive, will be in the interests of consumers, and will bring much more competition to Heathrow. I remain optimistic that we can get through this and get approval."

The Commission is making a general study of European alliances, but did not specifically review any of the big link-ups before they were approved. United has linked with Lufthansa and SAS; Delta has linked with Swissair, Sabena and Austrian; and Northwest has tied with KLM.

Acting on advice from the OFT, Mr Lang has said he is minded to approve the deal if BA and American agree to certain conditions, including the divestment of 168 weekly slots at Heathrow. BA says it should be allowed to sell the slots.

Rival carriers say BA and American should give up 400 slots or more.

They fear BA and American could use their dominance of the north Atlantic to raise prices.

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Ciro Citterio buttons up Dunn deal

By JASON NISSE

CIRO CITTERIO, the men's fashion chain, has emerged as the surprise buyer of Dunn & Co, paying £3 million to KPMG, the receiver, for the purveyor of tweed, anoraks and sensible shoes that collapsed owing £6 million a month ago.

Nilesh Thakrar, design director of Ciro Citterio, said that the company intended to run both brands together.

It will turn the 125 Dunn shops over to Ciro Citterio, but keep a Dunn section in them.

Mr Thakrar said: "We don't want to disappoint our existing Dunn customer base, but we see the generation gap disappearing and older people buying more fashionable clothing."

Ciro Citterio, which is known for suits, jackets and smart casual wear for men under 30, bought Oakland from the receiver of Facia last year and

Home Brothers in 1993. It is to retain Dunn's 534 staff with the exception of seven in the corporate clothing side, which makes uniforms for the emergency services.

This is being sold separately by KPMG. Paul Jeffery, a partner, said that he had received a great deal of interest in the business.

The takeover is the second rescue for Dunn. It was taken over five years ago by Hodge, a Yorkshire firm, after its

original owner, the Dunn & Co pension fund, faced problems with the company.

The sell-off led to an unpleasant legal action last August when the liquidators of the original company sued the pension fund and its trustees for up to £8 million that it said should have been left in the company.

The business, which has headquarters in Swansea, was originally formed in 1886 by a former Quaker.

Shopping centre goes to Argent

Argent Group, the property investment company, has exchanged contracts to acquire Crystal Peaks shopping centre from Chesterfield Properties for £35.5 million.

The 300,000-sq ft centre, developed in the late 1980s, serves residential areas south of Sheffield. It includes a Sainsbury food store, 50 shops, a ten-screen cinema, 1,900 parking spaces, health centre and covered market. Norwich Union has agreed to buy a 210,000 sq ft retail warehouse development on adjoining land.

AAA insurer

Scottish Equitable announced record new business figures yesterday, on the day that Standard & Poor's gave it a top AAA rating as a reflection of its integral position within Aegon, the Dutch insurance group. Total new premiums last year rose 41 per cent, to a record £1.42 billion. Total annualised premium income rose 28 per cent, to £249.3 million.

ICI splash out

ICI, the chemicals and paints company, is investing £12 million in a new 20 million litre-a-year factory near Chandigarh in northern India to produce paint for the decorative and automotive markets.

Uno profits

Uno, the AIM-listed specialist retailer of upholstered furniture, reported pre-tax profits of £306,000 (£379,000 loss) for the 28 weeks to November 9, before exceptional flotation costs of £817,000. Adjusted earnings were 1.41p a share (2.71p loss), and there is a maiden interim dividend of 1.5p.

Denmans deal

Denmans Electrical, the distributor of electrical products, is negotiating a further acquisition to complete its diversification away from electrical wholesaling. The company reported a fall in pre-tax profits to £2.4 million, from £3 million, in the year to September 30.



Jeff Smith, photographed at AIM Group's factory in Bournemouth yesterday, expects an excellent full-year result

AIM Group goes into treble time

By RICHARD FOSTER

PROFITS of AIM Group, which designs and makes interiors for aircraft and train coaches, more than trebled to £2.8 million, from £910,000, before tax and exceptional items in the six months to October 31.

Adjusted earnings rose 112 per cent from 7.2p a share to 15.3p and the interim dividend is doubled to 3p a share, from 1.5p.

Turnover increased nearly 50 per cent, from £24.3 million to £36.1 million.

The company has secured a contract for the Nimrod 2000 programme to refurbish 23 aircraft over seven years. Northwest Airlines has also extended its order to 178 aircraft interiors.

Jeff Smith, chairman of AIM, said: "There is every expectation of an excellent full-year result."

Growth in housebuilding reflects market confidence

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

FURTHER strength in the housing market was signalled yesterday after a jump in the number of applications to build houses. The increase coincides with growth in the buying power of first-time buyers.

In the final quarter of last year applications to build

homes rose 30 per cent over the same period of 1995 to 37,000, according to the National House-Building Council. Private-sector applications, excluding housing associations, showed a greater jump in activity with a 40 per cent increase in the last three

months of 1996 to 33,000. The NHBC, which registers applications for new homes, also recorded an increase in average daily sales of new houses. They rose 5 per cent in the last quarter of 1996 on the previous year's rate. Some 43,000 homes were completed

in the final three months of last year, a 7 per cent rise.

First-time buyers have more cash to buy homes than at any time since the early 1970s, according to an index on time buyers' ability to buy produced by the NHBC. The index, based on average earn-

ings, required deposits and house prices, stood at 122 points — a slight increase on the previous quarter. Under the index, the higher the points, the more affordable are new homes. It breached 120 in 1995, while, in 1988, the height of the last housing boom, it stood at 77.

Basil Bean, chief executive of the NHBC, said: "The pick-up in levels of UK house-building activity is very encouraging and provides further evidence of recovery in the housing market. Thanks to improving levels of consumer confidence, the lowest mortgage interest rates for more than 20 years and record levels of new home affordability, the prospects for sustained growth in the new housing market over the coming year are now the best for some time."

But Mr Bean gave warning that the industry needed to see another year of growth before the housing recession could be declared at an end.

Tempos, page 28

Tarmac sees international gloom

By OLIVER AUGUST

A TRADING statement by Tarmac, one of the UK's leading construction groups, bodes ill for the building sector in Europe and America.

Tarmac, of which Neville Simms is chief executive, expects only stabilisation or small growth in 1997, and the more buoyant US market is predicted to level off. Germany's construction sector is dipping further into gloom as the post-unification building boom ends.

Looking back on 1996, Tarmac reported construction or-

ders worth £1.25 billion, which include secured turnover for 1997 of £947 million. Both figures are said to be slightly up on historical comparisons.

The company said: "Construction services activities performed in line with the group's expectations, with a useful contribution in the second half from the newly acquired rail businesses."

The heavy building materials divisions were hit hardest by the absence of a full construction recovery. In the UK, the low demand reported

at the interim stage continued, and quarry product sales volumes for the year fell by between 5 and 10 per cent.

In North America, overall sales volumes for 1996 rose by 1 per cent, but local price increases hit market share in certain areas. Of other overseas activities, France in particular was hit by "continued weakness in the market."

Tarmac's financial position was reported to have improved, with net debt reduced thanks to disposals in American quarrying activities.



Simms: low demand in UK

Departures setback for GGT deal

By JASON NISSE

GGT GROUPS planned £105 million purchase of French advertising agency BDDP has been dealt another setback by the resignations of two of the most senior executives in the French agency.

Jean-Michel Carlo, one of the partners in BDDP, has told colleagues that he is leaving. He has been asked by BDDP not to join any rival firm until April 1, when GGT's £55 million rights issue to fund the deal should be completed.

Nathalie Rastoin, the general manager of BDDP in Paris, has told the company she is also going and will join Ogilvie & Mather, the agency owned by WPP Group.

The departures come on top of the loss of \$50 million of business from Ford, the motor company, by Wells Rich Greene, the US agency owned by BDDP. GGT hopes to reveal the terms of the BDDP deal by February.

Backing for ostrich rescue

By MAIRIANNE CURPHEY

INVESTORS who lost money when an ostrich farming company collapsed have backed a "rescue plan" that has meant them contributing more cash.

To take part, people had to put up at least 13 per cent of their original investment and hand over ownership of their birds, which are kept on farms in Belgium.

A total of £1.5 million needed to be raised by last Friday in order for the launch of a new ostrich farming company, called Belaurtriche, to go ahead. The deadline has now been extended to January 20 in order to enable overseas investors to raise the cash in time.

Belaurtriche is backed by some of the original investors in the crashed Ostrich Farming Corporation. About 2,700 people put nearly £22 million into the OFC.

The company was closed down last April by the Department of Trade and Industry.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Europe's biggest broadcaster born

CLT of Luxembourg, part owner of Channel 5 in Britain, and Bertelsmann of Germany yesterday completed the merger of their television and radio interests, creating Europe's largest broadcaster. The new group, to be called CLT-UFA, will have annual turnover of about £3.2 billion. The merged company will control 19 TV stations, grouped under the RTL logo, and 23 radio stations, including Talk Radio and Atlantic 252 in Britain. In ten European countries. It will also have a large production and rights business. Its ownership of Channel 5, Britain's last free broadcaster, is part of its strategy of concentrating on advertiser-supported TV.

CLT and Bertelsmann signed an agreement in July to merge their broadcasting interests, but the deal took longer than expected to receive shareholder and regulatory clearance. The new company will be 49 per cent owned by Bertelsmann and 49 per cent owned by Audiofina, which is indirectly controlled by Groupe Bruxelles Lambert and Havas of France. It will have its headquarters in Luxembourg.

Amex to create 150 jobs

AMERICAN EXPRESS, the financial services company, is creating 150 jobs in Newcastle-upon-Tyne at a new European call-centre serving card members in Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Switzerland and Britain. American Express has outsourced the call-centre operation to Matrix Marketing, a subsidiary of Cincinnati Bell Inc. Companies with existing teleshopping centres in Newcastle include the Automobile Association and British Airways.

Stake sale aids Birkby

PROFITS of Birkby Group rose to £6.3 million for the half year to September 30, helped by the company's disposal of its stake in Hill Hire, which raised £17.2 million. Excluding the exceptional profit, the workspace management company's pre-tax profits rose by 19 per cent, from £3.82 million to £4.54 million. Earnings per share before the exceptional profit rose by 17.5 per cent, from 6.3p to 7.4p. The interim dividend is up from 2.2p to 2.3p. Proceeds of the Hill Hire stake sale were used to buy British Coal Enterprise, adding 1.5 million square feet.

Limit capacity at £644m

THE London Insurance Market Investment Trust (Linit), the largest Lloyd's corporate capital vehicle, has announced underwriting capacity of £644 million for 1997. Linit has allocated capacity to 84 syndicates managed by 35 managing agency groups, compared with 95 syndicates managed by 36 managing agents in 1996. Direct capacity attributable to Linit shareholders is £615 million. The net tangible asset value at December 31, last year, was £20.4p (118.9p) per share. The shares were unchanged at 129p.

Atlantic Telecom up

ATLANTIC TELECOM, Britain's first quoted wireless telephony company, said it has gained almost 1,600 residential and business customers, twice as many as it had forecast, in its first two months of commercial operation and expects to break even in two or three years. Atlantic reported an operating loss of £217,000 in the half year to September 30, against a loss of £440,000 previously, on turnover of £3.76 million. A one-off gain of £541,000 on the sale of Coventry Cable produced pre-tax profits of £300,000 (£397,000 loss).

Tempos, page 28

Provision hurts VHE

VHE Holdings, the land regeneration and reclamation company, suffered a fall in pre-tax profits to £1 million, from £1.2 million, in the half-year to September 30. The decrease comes after a £500,000 provision against a dismantling contract that was adversely affected by a fall in steel prices. Earnings fell to 2.1p a share, from 2.5p. Turnover rose to £20.1 million, from £17.2 million. Again there is no interim dividend but the company said that it would resume dividend payments at the time of the full-year results.

Bucknall pays out again

BUCKNALL GROUP, the facilities management and business services company, is resuming dividend payments after a six-year absence. Shareholders are to get a 0.25p a share interim dividend after the company achieved a 36 per cent rise in profits to £354,000 in the half year ended October 31. Earnings were 20 per cent higher at 1.2p. The shares rose 1p to 52p. Richard Miles, the chairman, said that the company had made considerable progress in markets that were only slightly improved.

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.54	2.54	0.655
Austria Sch	19.05	18.15	1.125
Belgium Fr	57.68	52.36	2.50
Canada \$	2.361	2.291	1.125
Cyprus Cyp	0.829	0.774	0.774
Denmark Kr	10.88	9.88	8.38
Finland Mk	8.53	7.88	22.00
France Fr	8.36	8.71	12.25
Germany Dm	2.61	2.60	2.43
Greece Dr	432	407	194.00
Hong Kong \$	13.57	12.57	1.770
Ireland P	120	120	1.840
Israel Sh	1.07	0.85	
Italy Lit	5.74	5.09	
Japan Yen	208.80	205.7	

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

KIRKBY FINANCE (UK) PLC

IN RE KIRKBY FINANCE (UK) PLC

LIQUIDATION

On 6 December 1996, the above

named company was placed into

administration by the Court of

England. The Liquidator is

James Robert Drummond

of Messrs J. & T. Smith, 111

Regent Street, London, W1B 4AL.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that

the Liquidator is required to

advertisers to provide details of

their claims, on or before the 21

January 1997 by sending to R D

Drummond, the Liquidator, at the

address given below, written

statements of the amount they

claim to be due from the company.

They must also, if so requested,

provide such further details or

produce such documentary or

other evidence as may appear

necessary to the Liquidator.

A creditor who has not provided his

claim in the time specified above

is not entitled to distribute

proceeds of the company's assets

in respect of a debt not already

proved to the satisfaction of the

Court of England. Dated 15

January 1997. R D Drummond,

Liquidator, 111 Regent Street,

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□ Some impertinent advice for the Chancellor □ National Express drops the pilot □ Gap in pensions regulator's armoury

No demand for dearer money

ONE of the pleasures of writing a column like this is the occasional offer of impertinent advice to those who know better, such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Kenneth Clarke might bear in mind the following as he goes into bat this morning against the Bank of England.

The Bank is not terribly concerned, it seems, about the rise in sterling. Markets go up and down, old boy, and the pound can fall back again at any time. A strong currency does not necessarily translate into lower prices on the high street, particularly if there is lots of consumer demand in the economy.

But the key question is just how much demand there really is out there. For every teenage scribbler who lived through the ageing process of the late 1980s and is convinced that another inflationary boom and bust is just around the corner, there is a piece of evidence that suggests the opposite. Here are a few:

● For all the hopeful headlines and pretty shopping pictures on newspaper front pages, the actual evidence suggests that Christmas on the high street was disappointing. The CBI's report showed sales volumes well short of retailers' expectations; the British Retail Consortium reported a "nail-biting" time for its members.

● There is much talk about

rising pay, but underlying trends in personal incomes are not nearly as strong as headline figures suggest. David Owen, of Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, points out that annual real personal disposable income growth of 4.6 per cent in the third quarter of last year, the strongest rise since 1988, was distorted by the inclusion of income flowing into pension funds and life assurance companies.

This income includes dividends, net interest and rental income as well as the fruits of share buybacks and special dividends. None of this is about to be spent on the high street.

● Despite the hype surrounding windfalls from building society mergers and conversions, evidence derived from the two handouts already made suggests that little of the money has actually been spent. A survey by Nikko Europe found that two thirds of the windfalls to come are likely to be saved.

● Consumers are not going to get a big boost from higher wages. The latest figures from Incomes and Data Services suggest that pay settlements have

fallen back below 3.5 per cent for the first time since 1995.

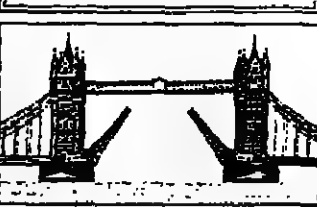
None of this rules out a quarter-point rise this week or next month. What it does suggest, and this is far more important, is that the variation in interest rates in the current cycle might be slight.

Base rates troughed at 5.25 per cent in February 1994. The Liffe futures market is currently pricing in a half point rise in base rates by September and another half point over the next year, still leaving rates at 7 per cent. But if the latest evidence is anything to go by, even that may be too pessimistic.

Driving down a dead end?

IF IT is an invariable rule in corporate life that if a company admits an offence, it is guilty of far worse, National Express admits to having chosen the wrong man as chief executive five months ago but claims that there was no boardroom bust-up; ergo, there must have been tears and tantrums all round.

PENNINGTON



Ernie Patterson's departure was a genuine surprise. The previous day the company was reported in this newspaper to be planning its most ambitious diversification yet, a £380 million purchase of Welcome Break from Granada, within 24 hours it had jettisoned the driver.

Little wonder there was a strong whiff of damage limitation in the air yesterday. A positive trading statement trimmed the share price fall; the immediate appointment of a successor will have helped too.

But that damage limitation will have posed a problem for the company spin doctors. Everyone will assume a row: do you depict Mr Patterson as the headlong opportunist whose wildest

dreams had to be reined in by more sober executives? Tempting, but this would preclude any further ambitious moves such as the purchase of Welcome Break or Birmingham Airport.

Instead, Mr Patterson is being painted as a stick-in-the-mud who stood against an exciting future, "Mr Obscurity", to use his stock market nickname, whose departure after five months is no great loss. Also dangerous, he becomes the experienced man brought in from outside who suggested a foot on the brakes rather than the purchase of anything visible from the coach windows.

If you buy expertise, you need a compelling reason to ignore it. If National Express does decide to venture beyond its core coach and rail business and lives to regret it, directors cannot claim they have not been warned.

Mr Patterson acquired an appreciation of the benefits of caution, along with his first big salary pay-off, at BET, a company that was humbled by unwise and hasty diversification. There is already a long list of privatised concerns who have

expanded beyond their area of competence. There must now be a serious danger of National Express joining that list.

Whistling in the dark

THE Pensions Act was meant to make as sure as practicable that there was no repeat of the Robert Maxwell affair or the many other abuses that did not make enough headlines to stir Parliament into action. The new regime was symbolically inaugurated when John Hayes rang the curtain up on the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority.

But some change may be more symbolic than real. Mr Hayes deserves the good wishes of all pension fund members. To achieve his ends, he also needs to be feared by those tempted into fraud and malpractice. Fraud is usually triggered by a Maxwell-style cash crisis. Preventive measures are more likely to work than deterrents. Malpractice often arises when greed or the Gradgrind mentality overcomes directors during

the course of bids, deals and restructurings.

In each case, a regulator needs to know what is going on. Mr Hayes will have to rely on whistleblowers such as auditors and trustees, because forcing 200,000 schemes to make regular returns to his office would be bureaucratic, costly and might discourage employers from providing their own schemes. On the other hand, it might have encouraged the closure of more than 100,000 tiny registered schemes that are most open to secret manipulation and should probably not exist.

Building brands

RESEARCH from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson suggests that most building societies are not worth much. The broker hired Interbrand to value the names of mortgage lenders, and found that brands such as Alliance & Leicester and Northern Rock do little to attract custom. The big brands such as Halifax and Abbey National are useful because they are attached to huge retail chains. Loyalty counts for nothing, and price, and the lowest rate you can offer, is all. Follow this through to its logical conclusion, and the average small society seeking to convert to plc status can expect one fate: extinction by takeover.



Peter Aikens, right, Matthew Clark chief executive, and Hugh Etheridge, finance director, toast the share price rise

Matthew Clark shares lifted by recovery plan

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

SHARES of Matthew Clark, the troubled drinks company, rose 10 per cent yesterday as the City reacted positively to recovery plans.

Matthew Clark shares plummeted nearly 60 per cent in the autumn after the company blamed slumps for a huge fall in the sales of its premium packaged brands, which include Diamond White and K Cider. Shares in the company closed at 33p yesterday, up 29.5p, compared with a high of 50p last year.

Peter Aikens, chief executive, admitted that the impact of the arrival of alcopops was misjudged, although he said the company is now confident of restoring its growth prospects over the medium term.

It estimates that lost sales, combined with a fierce price war, will cost around £22 million in lost profits this year. The company is responding with a fourfold increase in its advertising expenditure, to around £10 million, and it expects to maintain its final dividend at 24p a share.

The drinks company said that it had introduced price increases last week, the first for four years, and was confident that the rest of the sector would follow its lead. Matthew Clark is also about to launch Blackthorn Gold, the first smoothflow cider, backed by substantial advertising.

Pre-tax profits for the six

months to October 31 rose 40 per cent, to £21.6 million, on an overall turnover of £293 million, an increase of 68 per cent. But earnings per share fell 26 per cent, to 16.3p, because of the diluting impact of the acquisition of Traction Cider last November.

The branded drinks division increased profits by 48 per cent, to £20.9 million. The company said that sales of its Diamond White and K brands had fallen by around 30 per cent since the summer and profits had suffered by around £11 million as a consequence. The intense price competition, resulting in a fall in off-trade margins, had also had a £4 million negative impact.

Meanwhile, sales of draught products fell by around 11 per cent, costing the company around £7 million.

But there was a better performance from non-cider products, with Stowells of Chelsea, the leader in the bottle wine sector, increasing sales by 21 per cent, and sales of Stowells bottled water rising 31 per cent. Profits in the wholesale division rose by 61 per cent, to £3.1 million, after a reorganisation programme.

Matthew Clark added that Christmas trading was slightly below initial expectations. An unchanged interim dividend (9p) is payable April 9.

Tempus, page 28

Hodder Headline publishes 9% gain

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE bestselling talents of John Le Carré, Stephen King and Kenny Dalglish gave a lift to sales at Hodder Headline, one of the UK's largest book publishers, in the final quarter of last year.

In the 12 months to December 31, the company's like-for-like sales grew 9 per cent, while in the last quarter they were ahead 12 per cent.

Tim Hely Hutchinson, chief executive, said that trading benefited from "outstanding sales" of such hardback

bestsellers as *The Tailor of Panama* by John Le Carré, *Desperation* by Stephen King and Kenny Dalglish's autobiography. He said that hardback bestseller sales had risen substantially since the end of the Net Book Agreement.

The book market is showing relatively modest growth, he said, suggesting that Hodder Headline is increasing its market share. Sales last year were around £93 million (£89 million). Preliminary results will be released in March.

Recovery prompts big bonus payout at DTC

By ROBERT MILLER

STAFF at Debenham Tewson & Chinnock (DTC), the quoted commercial property agent and chartered surveyor, are set to receive hefty year-end bonuses after a near-100 per cent jump, to £1.86 million, in half-time, pre-tax profits.

Richard Lay, chairman, said: "If our current levels of profitability are maintained for the year, our staff costs will rise to take account of our bonus scheme." Earnings rose to 2.44p a share, from 1.22p. The company, which cut its

interim dividend to 0.6p a share last time, is now increasing the dividend to 0.9p.

Mr Lay said the recovery in the commercial property market was now spreading from London into the main regional centres, but added: "Business generally may well delay property and investment decisions during the run-up to a general election, and it is likely that interest rates will rise to control inflation, not least in the residential market, during the next few months."

Passenger surge boosts BAA

By CARL MORTSHED



Egan: a record year

TRAFFIC through BAA's airports surged 7.8 per cent in December, with strong growth at Gatwick and on North Atlantic routes.

The group had a record year, with 96.3 million passengers passing through its gates in 1996, up 5.5 per cent on the previous year. BAA shares rose 18p to 503p.

Traffic to the Irish Republic showed the strongest growth, up 12.6 per cent on last year. North Atlantic traffic grew 7.4 per cent and other long-haul passengers rose 9 per cent.

European charter volumes fell 5.3 per cent because of a reduction in capacity by tour operators. Passenger growth at Heathrow remained subdued, with an annual rise of only 3.3 per cent because of a reduction in fare discounting by the main airlines.

Gatwick achieved overall growth of 7.7 per cent thanks to a strong contribution from scheduled traffic. BAA, whose chief executive is Sir John Egan, said yesterday that European charter traffic now accounted for only a third of

passengers at Gatwick, which is finding increasing acceptance as a second international hub alongside Heathrow.

Stansted remained the fastest growing airport in the group with a 24 per cent increase in traffic in the year to 4.8 million passengers.

BAA's Scottish airports showed strong growth in December, with Edinburgh and Aberdeen increasing passenger volumes by more than 12 per cent.

Tempus, page 28

Ashquay beaten by deadline

By FRASER NELSON

ASHQUAY, the property group, has lost its £21 million takeover bid for the rival UK Estates after its last-minute share buy missed registration by Monday's deadline.

The hostile bidder said yesterday that it had won only 45.8 per cent of UK Estates, leaving it 4.2 per cent short of victory. It succeeded in buying the outstanding shares in the market by 12.58pm on Monday, but the transfer did not reach the registrar in time for the 1pm deadline, so the bid failed.

Ashquay said an earlier hitch in the Crest settlement system also hindered it. Ashquay is left with £1 million expenses and a loss of £133,000 on its shares in UK Estates, down 5p, to 23½p. Ashquay eased 3p, to 37p.

Opra gets tough on infringements

By ROBERT MILLER

TOUGH new guidelines on whistleblowing by City pension fund professionals who guard some £600 billion of assets are expected to be unveiled by the new pensions watchdog (see Pennington, this page).

John Hayes, chairman of the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra), a statutory body established under the 1995 Pensions Act, plans to issue a consultative document ahead of final rules being in place by April 6. From that date professions such as auditors and accountants will have a legal obligation to report any suspected infringements in the 300,000 occupational pension plans registered with Opra.

Mr Hayes said: "The guidelines we will issue for consultation make it clear that professionals involved with occupa-

tional pension schemes have a duty to blow the whistle on any possible infringement."

The watchdog, who has the power to fine companies up to £50,000 and individuals up to £5,000, added: "I want to make clear that if someone makes a genuine mistake and owns up to it and we can sort it out properly we are not necessarily talking about fines. However, if dishonesty and deception are involved we will act swiftly and decisively. We do have civil powers to secure pension fund assets."

Also coming into force this year are new rules on member trustees being appointed to company or occupational schemes. Mr Hayes said lay trustees had nothing to fear as long as they exercised normal caution and diligence.

City Diary, page 29

Project delay hits Babcock

By MARTIN BARROW

BABCOCK International, the engineering group, said sales revenue in the year to March 31, 1998 would be reduced by about £8 million due to the further deferral of the Hanson-SCM Kemerton project, for which the group's process division had a major engineering services role.

Babcock said that its process division had recently won a £10 million lump sum contract in connection with a new chromic acid plant to be built at Teesside, which would partly compensate for the loss on the project at Hanson's titanium dioxide plant in Kemerton, Australia. Babcock shares fell 4p to 71p.

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MARITAL STATUS OF EITHER ADULT IS (MARRIED) _____
DATE OF BIRTH _____ No. OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 _____

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Steel shares buckle as the pound's rise hits profits

AS THE rest of the stock market soared to its highest level ever, shares of British Steel were plummeting the depths.

The price ended 5.4p down at a new low of 146.4p ahead of a presentation for brokers in London last night at which it was hoped the group would shed further light on damage that the strong pound was inflicting on profits.

Only a few weeks ago the company indicated that the strong pound was playing havoc with its ability to compete, providing the signal for a series of savage profit downgradings.

Brokers that had been looking for profits at the pre-tax level of £650 million for the year to March 1998 cut their forecasts to £350 million. That compares with estimates for the current year of £550 million. Last year the group made profits of more than £1 billion.

One company which has suffered from falling steel prices is VHE Holdings, which specialises in the re-use of land and is headed by Brian Waldron, chairman, with Brian Thomson, managing director. The company saw profits slide in the first half after the price of one of its dismantling contracts was adversely affected in between tendering for the work and completing the project. It finished 1.1p cheaper at 85p.

The rest of the equity market continued to race ahead amid growing hopes that the Chancellor will be able to stave off another rise in interest rates at his meeting with the Governor of the Bank of England today.

Stock shortages and a positive start to trading on Wall Street enabled prices to close at their best of the day. The FTSE 100 index surged 60.9 to close at an all-time high of 4,168.2, stretching the gain for the past two days to 111.6. Total turnover reached a healthy one billion shares.

The best gains were seen among financials, where stock shortages were acute. Double-digit gains were seen in the banks where National Westminster leapt 2.4p to 783p, Barclays 29p to £11.11, HSBC 32.2p to £13.85, Lloyds TSB 22.2p to 480p, Abbey National 27p to 800p, Bank of Scotland 15p to 323p, Royal Bank of Scotland 14p to 532p, and Standard Chartered 18p to 711p.

The composite insurers had



Brian Waldron, left, and Brian Thomson of VHE, down 1.1p

that old takeover favourite Commercial Union 21p better at 713p. General Accident 11.1p at 796p, and Royal Sun Alliance 10.1p at 453p. The life insurers also had bright starts, with British American 17.1p at 782p, London & Manchester Group 6.1p at 427p, Prudential 23p at 537p, and United Assurance 14p at 517p. BAT Industries, with strong inter-

performances in the run-up to Christmas, Morgan Stanley, the US securities house, and rival NatWest Securities were both pushing the supermarket chain to clients. NatWest is particularly keen on Somerfield up 6.1p at 171p ahead of maiden interim figures next week. Others to benefit were Asda, up 4.1p to 129p, Kwik Save 10p to 332p.

Charles Sidney, the Bradford-based Mercedes vehicle distributor, is making up lost ground, its share price gaining a further 1.1p to 91.1p, compared with a 1996 peak of 107p. Whispers in the market claim a bid of 120p a share may soon be on the table. This would give the group a price tag of almost £50 million.

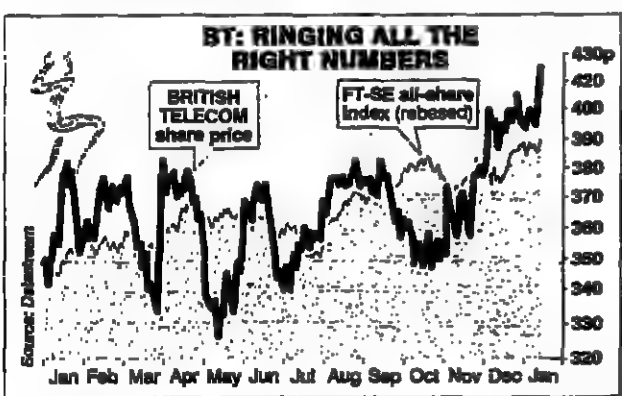
estimates in the financial sector, rose 21p to 493.5p, while Mercury Asset Management put on 36.1p at £12.57.

BT climbed 9p to 414.5p as UBS, the broker, upgraded its holding to a "buy". Almost 21 million shares had changed hands by the close.

The food retailers benefited as investors began switching out of the general retailers after a series of patchy trading

Wm Morrison, 7p to 160.5p, Safeway, 13.1p to 426.5p, and J Sainsbury, 11p to 401.5p.

Courtaulds, the chemicals distributor, fell 6p to 37p after a large line of stock went through the market as part of a protected trade. Brokers say 10.78 million shares were placed with institutions at 382.1p earlier in the week. Secure Retirement, subject of



a reverse takeover from South-Atlantic Football Club, scored from the kick-off with a sharp rise in the share price after returning from suspension. The shares, suspended at 40p, began trading at 140p before touching a peak for the day of 175p. They later settled at 150p, a rise of 10.4p on the day.

Sunderland, the recent market debutante, also put on 15p at 695p after being floated at 583p, but Manchester United slipped from its all-time high to close 9p lower at 707p. West Bromwich Albion rose £30 to £250 as Paul Thompson, a director, picked up a further 5,000 shares at £245 each. It takes his total holding to 13,192, or 18 per cent.

Matthew Clark, the troubled chipmaker, rallied a further 29p to 332.5p despite first-half figures falling "substantially" short of target. Pre-tax profits were 40 per cent below target at £21.6 million, helped by recent acquisitions with the dividend held at 9p. Rival Meridown was unchanged at 107.5p.

National Express touched 526.1p before recovering to close just 3p off at 540.1p after the resignation of Ernest Patterson, chief executive, who has been just five months in the job.

A bumper set of half-year figures lifted AIM Group 47p to 417p. Brokers have now begun upgrading their profit numbers for the full year. A revived flurry of institutional buying benefited Wyndham Press, the printer, which ended the session 14p stronger at 241.1p, just a shade below its high for 1996.

An upbeat statement to shareholders at the annual meeting lifted McCarthy & Stone 6p to 114.5p. **CLILT-EDGED:** The London bond market recovered from some early falls on the back of strong mark-up among US Treasury bonds. The March series of the long gilt finished 1.1p higher at £109.23, after touching a low of £109.11.

Treasury 8 per cent 2021 rose 1.1p to £103.16, but shorter dated issues were subdued ahead of today's monthly economic meeting. Treasury 6 per cent 1999 was one tick lower at £98.4.

CLNEW YORK: Wall Street stocks showed solid gains in early trading. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was up 38.49 points at 6,747.67.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday)
Dow Jones 6747.67 (+38.49)
S&P Composite 766.06 (+1.17)

Tokyo
Nikkei Average 10092.15 (+25.66)

Hong Kong
Hang Seng 13297.87 (+4.66)

Amsterdam
Euro Index 657.83 (+5.07)

Sydney
ASX 2614.6 (+2.4)

Frankfurt
DAX 2948.86 (+4.07)

Singapore
Straits 2215.52 (+16.88)

Brussels
General 11023.20 (+75.17)

Paris
CAC-40 3802.14 (+30.87)

Zurich
SIX 899.20 (+1.10)

London
FT 100 2804.4 (+22.38)

FT 100 2804.4 (+22.38)

FTSE Mid 250 2857.2 (+22.3)

FTSE 250 2857.2 (+22.3)

FTSE Europe 100 1965.96 (+4.42)

FT All-share 2842.56 (+24.42)

FT Non Financials 2898.44 (+18.03)

FT Financials 2842.56 (+24.42)

FT Govt 2842.56 (+24.42)

Bargains 523.16

US
S&P 500 1024.79

German Mark 2.4996 (+0.0073)

Bank of England official base 5.5 (+0.25)

ESX 1.1752

RPI 153.9 New (2.7%) Jan 1997-100

RPI 153.7 New (2.7%) Jan 1997-100

RECENT ISSUES

Aquarius 174p +1

KZW Endowment Red 54p -6

Catcentre 271p -6

Epicore Network 35p -15

GB Railways 241p +15

Harley Underwear 175p +15

Highways 155p +15

Neval 782p +1

Oxford Biomedica 65p +1

Parkwood Holdings 74p -1

Phil Tech 39p -1

Sunderland 695p +15

Sunair Harbour 132p +30

Wm Morrison 129p +10

Xenova 224p -30

RIGHTS ISSUES

Compel Gp 1/1p (160) 3p -

Fisher J 1/1p (120) 16p -

Pressac 1/1p (180) 30p -

Prism Rail 1/1p (330) 160p +35

RFC 1/1p (150) 15p -

Shadwell 1/1p (137) 22p -

Wicks 1/1p (150) 25p -

MAJOR CHANGES

FBSS: 150p (+103p)

Secure Future 382p (+29p)

Matthew Clark 332p (+29p)

Servis 40p (+31p)

Chapman 810p (+35p)

Telecom 282p (+15p)

Bark Scotland 323p (+15p)

Celtech 567p (+25p)

Prudential 537p (+23p)

Provident 530p (+17p)

Kingline 670p (+25p)

Guernsey 620p (+25p)

Nat West 783p (+24p)

Kwik Save 33p (+10p)

Com Union 713p (+21p)

Oxons 521p (+20p)

Abell National 800p (+40p)

FALLS:

Atlas Equip 607p (-47p)

MAID 168p (-10p)

Hedley 330p (-14p)

Go Ahead 488p (-19p)

Selkirk 384p (-19p)

Smile 777p (-119p)

Closing Prices Page 31

TEMPUS

Foundational dilemma

PUFFS for the housing market tend to focus on rising prices. Mortgage providers provide regular reports, selectively highlighting an extraordinary percentage rise in values in one region or another. But for builders, the issue is transaction volume - without an army of potential buyers trading mud into the carpets of their show houses, there is little to be gained from house price inflation.

Builders are manufacturers, not dealers. Holding unsold stock is both expensive and potentially dangerous as it leads to weaker cashflow and increased debt levels. Therefore, new housing starts have remained subdued as builders await signs of new demand. But according to figures from the National House-Building Council, the industry is anticipating greater demand. Housing starts were up 40 per cent in the fourth quarter and

sales are up as well. The market seized on the news and bullish forecasts from one broker but not all the shares did well.

Prices of new homes have remained static as secondhand stock gained in value and some believe new home prices should now rise. That may be the case but the real gains will go to those builders who bought land early in those areas showing the strongest growth, namely London and the South East. Those builders with expensive land may find that better house prices can rescue their shaky margins but are unlikely to rescue their share prices. Berkeley Group and Barratt should therefore benefit but Wimpey was noticeably unaffected by yesterday's share rally. If new homes are slow to benefit from rising prices, it is because the public is rejecting the product, a dilemma builders have still to address.

Matthew Clark

MATTHEW CLARK has been given a breather - the company enjoyed its first substantial share price bounce since last autumn's calamitous profits warning. The City, it seems, is prepared to accept the company's humble admission that it failed to notice falling order sales as young drinkers switched to ale. More important, Matthew Clark has bought some time to allow its marketing-led recovery strategy to take effect.

Matthew Clark was once hit hard by the rise in beer prices, its chief rival, for two reasons: it failed to invest in promoting its products and its Diamond White brand is targeted at the same market as the ale. The company has belatedly learnt that marketing is the key to success in such a fashion-driven busi-

BAA

TO OWN the main road out of town is a good thing. To own shops and restaurants at the toll booth on the main road out of town is even better. Best of all is to own all these things and then to watch coach operators conduct a price war as they compete to carry passengers along your road to the next town.

Happy is the shareholder in BAA who can benefit from all the above. With a stake in the main exit from Britain, he will enjoy the fruits of a strong surge in December traffic and a prognosis that traffic forecasts are looking bullish for the year ahead.

Passenger numbers were not entirely positive last year - Gatwick suffered from a self-imposed squeeze by tour operators. After a disastrous bout of price-cutting in 1995, holiday companies reduced capacity in a bid to build up volumes. Likewise, major airlines made a big push for

CIDER LESS ROBY

yield in 1996, temporarily reducing discounts on fares. But the signs are that the outbreak of sanity is coming to an end. British Airways has relaunched its World Offers and the airline industry is back to its usual strategy of burns on seats. That means fuller planes and more passengers loitering in BAA's malls. Traffic volumes at Heathrow should begin to advance more robustly after a sluggish 3.3 per cent increase in 1996. And a further boost could come from slot trading at airports. Should airlines be allowed to trade freely in landing slots, bigger planes are the logical consequence, leading to more passengers in the airport.

Atlantic, a small Scottish company, has found another method, and it seems to work. Atlantic is using wireless radio technology to provide phone services. It can connect customers for only £35 per line by zapping signals to window-mounted antennas, the equivalent figure for the cable companies and the wireline operators is about £500. Relatively low capital expenditures means that Atlantic can reach its break-even point much faster than its traditional rivals.

Roll-out costs, of course, do not matter unless Atlantic can convince the customers of BT, Mercury and the cable companies to make the switch. To lure them, Atlantic has offered cheap prices and gimmicks such as two lines for the price of one. The campaign has been a success so far, Atlantic is unlikely to become a large player, but its low cost structure makes it an attractive investment.

Atlantic

DENTING British Telecom's armour has never been easier. Aspiring competitors have either had to pay BT to piggyback on its network or dig holes in the road. Both options are costly. At-

Edited by CARL MORTIMER

COMMODITIES

LIFE				ICE-BUR (London 4.00pm)				GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES			
CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)				WHEAT (cwt/100 lbs)				BARLEY (cwt/100 lbs)			
Brent Physical				Mar				Jan			
Brent 15 Day (Near)				Apr				Feb			
Brent 15 Day (Mid)				May				Mar			
Brent 15 Day (Far)				Jun				Apr			
W Texas Intermediate (Feb)				Jul				May			
W Texas Intermediate (Mar)				Aug				Jun			
W Texas Intermediate (Apr)				Sep				Jul			
W Texas Intermediate (May)				Oct				Aug			
W Texas Intermediate (Jun)				Nov				Sep			
W Texas Intermediate (Jul)				Dec				Oct			
W Texas Intermediate (Aug)				Jan				Nov			
W Texas Intermediate (Sep)				Feb				Dec			
W Texas Intermediate (Oct)				Mar				Jan			
W Texas Intermediate (Nov)				Apr				Feb			
W Texas Intermediate (Dec)				May				Mar			
W Texas Intermediate (Jan)				Jun				Apr			
W Texas Intermediate (Feb)				Jul				May			
W Texas Intermediate (Mar)				Aug				Jun			
W Texas Intermediate (Apr)				Sep				Jul			
W Texas Intermediate (May)				Oct				Aug			
W Texas Intermediate (Jun)				Nov				Sep			
W Texas Intermediate (Jul)				Dec				Oct			
W Texas Intermediate (Aug)				Jan				Nov			
W Texas Intermediate (Sep)				Feb				Dec			
W Texas Intermediate (Oct)				Mar				Jan			
W Texas Intermediate (Nov)				Apr				Feb			
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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Advertisement's potent brew

SCOTTISH COURAGE will need to live up to its name. The brewery is in trouble after the Advertising Standards Authority upheld complaints from the European Commission, the European Movement and an MEP that its national advertising campaign was misleading.

The tongue-in-cheek advertisement featured Brussels sprouts arranged in a circle, underneath the headline "Keep them out of our BEER". It read: "Things used to be so simple... But now we have Brussels. Well-meaning chaps but perhaps a little zealous? They're even looking at the merits of standardising the way we brew our beer... Your Beck's is not your Beck's... Because in their infinite wisdom Brussels has decreed that all beer must now be brewed with an inferior standardised water." According to the ASA, the advertisement distorted the present position. Not to mention the political balance.

Hot water?

ROBERT FARRELL, the Merrill Lynch investment guru, is not afraid to put his dignity where his money is. To illustrate his view that the US market is overheating, fund managers were yesterday presented with a picture of a naked Farrell emerging from a hot tub in a boat on the Thames. "It's a sign of the top of the market, not the bottom, or I would have turned around," he beamed.



"It's a very cheap call - I'm ringing Sweden"

DAVID "Eager" Beaver just can't be stopped. The recently appointed chairman of KPMG Corporate Finance was yesterday made a non-executive director at TLS, the vehicle rental company. Peter Roberts, TLS group chief executive, and Beaver go back a long way - they share a passion for beer.

Seeking funds

WHISTLEBLOWING by City pension fund professionals such as auditors and accountants may well be de rigueur. But where does the average employee go? Public Concern at Work, the independent charity based in London, may be the answer. In three years it has received 4,000 inquiries on such issues as company fraud and public safety. Now the charity has run out of funding and needs a new sponsor to replace the Barings Foundation.

Price in touch

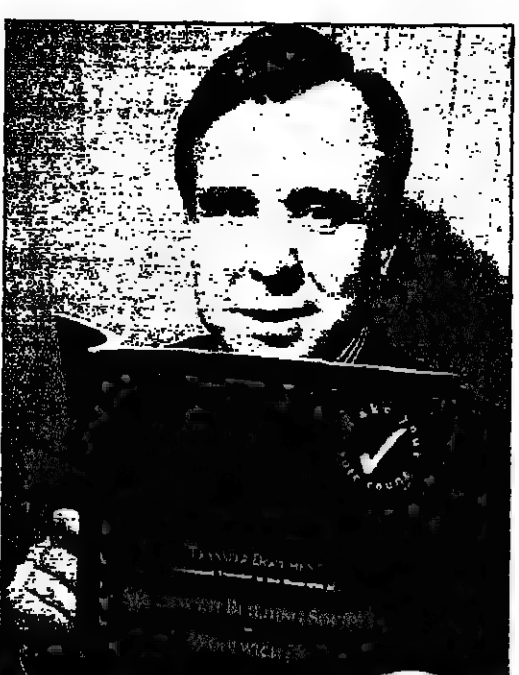
NEWS of Singer & Friedlander's decision to team up with former footballer Alan Hansen is of little interest to Charles Price. The recently appointed head of S&F's banking and treasury divisions has thighs only for rugby; he coaches a team of under 19s in Woodford. Price's move from NM Rothschild & Sons, coincides with a successful spate on the rugby field. Last weekend his side won the first round of the Essex Cup.

AN unfortunate gaffe for Leeds Group. In its directors' report, the textile group refers to "excruciating" dates of options outstanding at the end of the year. Most unpleasant.

MORAG PRESTON



White: said to be interested in Bradford and Bingley



Stewart: may find a white knight to be partner



Dickinson: will concentrate on mortgage lending

Mutual with muscle aims to be bank with big ideas

Marianne Curphey on the flotations of the Halifax and fellow building societies

In a matter of months, the Halifax Building Society will be transformed from a 145-year-old sleepy mutual into a high-profile FT-SE company. It will face the scrutiny of shareholders and the rigours of stock market accounting. As it prepares for the conversion, its eight million borrowers and savers will be receiving a transfer document outlining the details of flotation and how much each can expect to receive in free shares.

Halifax is coming to the stock market with £3 billion of surplus capital to spend. It has a long shopping list and its track record and reputation in the City give it the muscle to make some big acquisitions. On its list will be life and general insurance businesses, plus leasing and treasury. The latter two operations have been lucrative for another building society turned bank, the Abbey National.

On the insurance side, Halifax is at present digesting its acquisition of Clerical Medical, the life mutual. But the purchase has not satisfied the society's appetite for a bigger chunk of the long-term savings market and Halifax is watching closely the remaining annual insurers, among them Friends Provident, Scottish Widows, Scottish Amicable, Standard Life, Scottish Provident, NPI and Scottish Life.

With a rights issue, even a major insurance player such as Commercial Union, currently worth £4.7 billion and rumoured to have considered a tie-up with B&T Industries, would not be beyond Halifax's grasp. Alternatively, buying solid composite insurers such as General Accident, worth £3.7 billion, or Legal & General could prove fruitful for both parties.

Halifax is regarded in the Squire Mile as the best managed and most tightly run building society and has come top of UBS's league table for its financial performance for the past two years. It is big enough to buy an insurer and keep the brand name and current management - two important considerations for the board of any mutual is approaches.

Its fellow building societies that also plan flotations this summer - Alliance & Leicester and Woolwich - are unlikely to offer similar benefits. Both have been struggling to form alliances in the run-up to flotation, but approaches to smaller building societies and mutual insurers have been rebuffed so far.

Alliance & Leicester, where Peter White is chief executive, is rumoured to be interested in acquiring the Bradford & Bingley Building Society, which so far has declared itself strongly mutual, plus a mutual insurer, perhaps Friends Provident, Scottish Widows, or Scottish Amicable. But its aggressive reputation has frightened off some potential partners, and it is generally perceived to be too small to be attractive. A

merger or takeover involving the Woolwich, where John Stewart is chief executive, and another society would almost certainly lead to job losses, loss of the mutual's brand name and board, and the closure of one head office.

The alternative, a hostile bid, would require the A&L to appeal directly to the members of the building society it had set its sights on via the national press. Such a strategy worked for the Abbey National as it prepared to acquire the National & Provincial Building Society, but such tactics are expensive and do not always work. In addition, although championing the benefits of mutualism only weeks before it fell into the arms of Abbey, the N&P was widely regarded in the City as being effectively up for sale.

A similar problem afflicts the Woolwich. It is not big enough to be an attractive parent to a smaller mutual, but does face the prospect of being taken over by a bigger company. Talks with the Prudential, the UK's biggest name in life and pensions, appear to have foundered, but new legislation in the Building Societies Bill may make Woolwich and A&L more vulnerable.

At present, building societies that convert to banks are protected from hostile bids for five years. The Bill proposes that protection be removed if they make hostile bids for other companies in the financial services field. They are protected if they grow only through friendly

mergers. In addition, under the proposed legislation, a shareholder in the newly floated society can build up a 10 per cent stake and then call a special general meeting at which it can ask other shareholders to vote to veto the five-year protection rule. If they agree, the 10 per cent shareholder can then launch its own takeover bid. This could therefore lay converting societies open to hostile bids.

However, the Woolwich and A&L may feel that with the prospect of a general election in May, the Conservatives have more pressing issues than the intricacies of building society legislation and the Bill has no parliamentary slot. Alternatively, they may find white knights to be friendly partners before they become quoted.

The market will be dominated this year by the three floats, estimated to be worth more than £17 billion. A&L is expected to come to market in late April or May and the Woolwich in July. The Halifax, which has taken more than two-and-a-half years to come to market, will convert in June, subject to confirmation by the Building Societies Commission and other approvals.

A fourth, smaller player, is also planning flotation. Northern Rock, of which Robert Dickinson is chairman, has a distinctly northern and more cautious client base. It has indicated that it does not share the ambitions of the other three to become huge

personal financial services shops. It intends to concentrate on mortgage lending and the associated general and life insurance products that can be sold at the same time as a home loan.

Rob Thomas, an analyst with UBS, believes Northern Rock shares and those of the other three converting societies will be attractive in the next few years if the housing market remains as buoyant as predicted.

Meanwhile, as NatWest looks for another life mutual and Barclays is informally talking to insurers, including Norwich Union, Lloyds TSB has been quietly transforming itself into a highly focused retail bank.

This is the competition that Woolwich and the other converting societies should have their eye on. The successful purchase by Lloyds of the Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society and the building up its life business is a clever strategy. It has eschewed the investment banking option that NatWest Bank is currently keen to pursue and instead is believed to be looking for a purchase that would increase its 25 per cent share of the mortgage market.

The flotations will lift share ownership in the UK by a third to 12 million, higher even than the peak of individual investing in the boom years of the Eighties. Many of these investors will sell their shares almost immediately by post and they will be snapped up by the big City institutions. Halifax is conducting research to try to establish how many members will sell shares and will offer a postal dealing service. Halifax shares in particular will be sought by index-tracking funds when it enters the FT-SE 100 index, although a question mark remains over when.

When Abbey National bought the National & Provincial Building Society in August last year, 78 per cent of N&P's 665,000 savers who were given the choice of shares or cash opted for cash. The remaining 22 per cent took shares. A further 446,000 did not have the choice and were given shares. Four months on, more than 90 per cent retain their shares.

David Gilchrist, Halifax's corporate communications manager, believes other societies will in time follow Halifax's path to market. "We believe mutualism is a narrow focus," he said.

The original mutuals were formed from a group of people who came together for a common purpose and when that purpose had been served they were wound down. It is up to the members of the remaining mutuals whether they want to see the benefits of mutualism - slightly higher savings rates and slightly lower mortgage rates. However, some of the keenest competitors in the market place are not mutuals but pits.



Top team at the Halifax: from left, Mike Blackburn, chief executive, Jon Foulds, chairman, and Roger Boyes, the finance director

Philip Bassett examines the trend in unemployment figures

Will falling jobless work for Major?

Last month's enormous 95,800 drop in unemployment took seasonal adjusted claimant unemployment in the UK to below two million for the first time since February 1991. At that time, John Major had been Prime Minister for just three months. Now, almost six years later, with unemployment back below the key two million threshold, Mr Major may be out of office within months.

Since unemployment was last at two million, the claimant count rose to a peak of 2.98 million in December 1992. Barring a few blips, it has fallen steadily since then. Or at least it has on current figures: one of the peculiarities of the "seasonal adjustment" process used by the Office for National Statistics is the annual backward revision of the figures, due to take place again in April, which has an irritating tendency to shift turning points as new statistical evidence is applied.

The general trend of unemployment is not and has been clearly down. But below the two million mark, it is now more than one million down from its peak. But unemployment is still stubbornly

higher for men than for women. Last month there were 1.47 million men out of work, a rate of 9.4 per cent, compared with 459,000 women, at 3.7 per cent.

According to the most recent available figures, unemployment among young men and young women aged 18 to 24 has fallen at almost exactly the same rate. But the gap widens among people aged 25 to 49, with an 18.6 per cent fall for men compared with a 15.6 per cent drop among women. In

more peripheral regions. It is down 16.2 per cent in the South East, 16.7 per cent in the South West and 15.4 and 16 per cent in the West and East Midlands respectively. At the same time, it has fallen 9.9 per cent in Wales, and 7.2 per cent in Scotland.

But the pattern is far from clear. The North, for instance, has seen a fall of 15.5 per cent, while the 11.9 per cent drop in Northern Ireland has taken its overall unemployment rate to below 10 per cent for the first time since the early 1980s.

On average, unemployment is lower in Labour areas than in Conservative constituencies. In Conservative-held

Business leaders at the CBI suggest that unemployment will drop to 1.7 million by the end of next year

the 50-plus age group, the rate of fall among men, at 19.3 per cent, is close to double the female fall of 10.9 per cent. Even so, unemployment rates vary markedly by age: 14.9 per cent for people aged 18 to 19, 6.5 per cent for the 30 to 39 age group and 1.4 per cent among the over 60s.

In the main, over the past year, unemployment has fallen more rapidly in the more prosperous areas of the Midlands and the South than in the

constituencies, unemployment is on average 3,372, compared with 2,570 in Labour seats and 1,277 in those held by the LibDems.

But unemployment is now falling about half as fast again in Conservative seats as in Labour seats. In the 12 months to October, Conservative unemployment fell by 123,700 and Labour's by about 98,600 - a decline in Conservative areas of 13 per cent, compared with 9 per cent in Labour areas.

Unemployment among previously non-manual employees - the victims of the so-called white-collar recession of the early 1990s - is now falling faster than among previous blue-collar workers, with those formerly in professional jobs (especially women) seeing marked falls in unemployment, as well as those in sales jobs.

Looking ahead, the fall in unemployment is generally forecast to continue. The Government made underlying assumptions in the Budget about continuing falls in unemployment, while in their latest economic forecast, business leaders at the Confederation of British Industry are suggesting unemployment will drop to 1.7 million by the end of next year, and to 1.6 million the year after.

With an eye on key economic competitors such as Germany, where unemployment has just passed through the four million mark and is set to rise further, ministers take comfort from such forecasts. John Taylor, Trade and Industry Minister with responsibility for employee relations, says that the number of jobs in the labour market will grow - and "it is through the availability of jobs in the market that security will be obtained".



ANTHONY HARRIS

EMU: looking for hidden agendas

"It now seems likely that we will never again see interest rates raised by the Bundesbank or by the Bank of France. These economies are so far lagging the cycle that the next rise could be left to the proposed European Central Bank."

Obvious, when you think of it but this suggestion from David Hale does remind us how near the future is getting, and how severe the birth pangs it has already provoked. Are they bearable? Hale begs that question, but this column need not. Can we, in short, still take it for granted the EMU will be hatched on time?

By no means, in the judgment of Stephen Lewis of London Bond Brokers, who seems to find new grounds for scepticism at least once a week. I have resisted quoting him on this subject: it might look like wishful thinking; but now he has come up with two statements that surely deserve wider notice. One is from Gerrit Zalm, the Dutch finance minister, who argues that convergence ought not to mean just meeting targets on an arbitrary date, but doing so as a matter of natural routine, not contrivance. The other is from Robert Camdessus, until recently managing director of the IMF, who says that countries that submit themselves to EMU disciplines before that are truly ready will injure not only the system, but themselves.

Now it is true that Zalm does not speak for Germany, and Camdessus only for himself; but The Netherlands is always privy to German thoughts, and M Camdessus is a senior member, emeritus, of the French establishment. They look, in short, like two distinguished talking horses. Both their speeches might be translated, crudely, as "No Latins here". But that risks provoking a split in the EU; and is that all they mean? Both speeches might also be applied without much strain to France and Germany themselves. The pain is becoming so acute that even getting France and Germany to qualify on time might be political suicide for messrs Kohl and Chirac.

This may explain why Alain Delors, the author of the EMU project, withdrew from the French elections, and what the cunning François Mitterrand had in mind when he spent his last political breath assisting the Chirac campaign. "This," as the late Nicholas Kaldor remarked after looking at British economic prospects in 1974, "is an election we have

to lose". Labour won, fatally; but the seemingly doomed winners in France and Germany could still escape. A late start for EMU must look tempting. Zalm and Camdessus provide plausible reasons for delay.

But why stop at delay? It used to be generally assumed that the economic case for monetary union - "completing the single market" - was self-evident; but not any more. Indeed, a friend in the consultancy world rang me last week with a new problem. He wanted to arrange an EMU debate for clients, but he had yet to find a speaker willing to state a rational economic case for the project. The problem is troubling some American analysts, too: so they are beginning to look for hidden agendas. Here is one from California, and one of my own.

Tracy Herrick, whose reports are circulated by Jeffries, a big Los Angeles-based broker-dealer, finds political explanations even for events that look purely financial - stock market swings, for example. (Current warning: Presidential second terms nearly always cause sharp equity corrections.) EMU finds him ready: it is all about oil. Europe, he argues, used to rely on the US to safeguard its Middle East supplies. But these are now threatened by Islamic fundamentalists, especially in Saudi Arabia. That threat has been on the agenda of such groups as the World Business Forum for years. But America looks less willing, and probably less able, to handle it.

Where to turn? America, says Herrick, looks south - the Mexican Gulf, perhaps the Falklands. But for Europe the defensible fallback is Russia, which may be unable to keep internal order. So Europe needs military clout; but Germany is unable, under its constitution, to provide it. A European army would require political integration: the operation of EMU would lead there. A kind of Russian doll - a Trojan bird concealing a Trojan horse, money as a mask for politics as a mask for rearmament. Far-fetched, may be; but the problem is real, so it is surely worth a thought.

My own more modest candidate: pensions. The European pensions crisis will need such unpopular answers, by way of higher taxes and lower benefits, that the continent needs a scapegoat. EMU qualifies.

But invent your own. These are deep waters, Watson.

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Company	Price	Change	Dividend	Yield	P/E
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES					
Guinness	1.12	0.01	0.05	4.5%	25.0
Heineken	1.15	0.02	0.05	4.3%	26.7
Stout	1.10	0.01	0.05	4.5%	25.0
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BREWERIES, PUBS & REST					
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Who will speak for the Principality?

Ballykissangel, Father Ted, Cracker, Hamish Macbeth, McCallum... Surely something is missing? Every Celtic accent seems to go down a treat with the British viewing public except the lilt of Welsh. Blame Neil Kinnock, blame Dylan Thomas, blame Lloyd George.

There is a firm belief in the Principality that there is a national prejudice against the Welsh accent. Television producers in particular feel that it is harder for Wales to get programmes on the national networks.

Bad enough when the enemy is over the borders, but worse if it is within. Which is the principal broadcaster for Wales? A battle for the honour is raging between BBC Wales and S4C, the Welsh counterpart of Channel 4, and BBC Wales is losing.

Proof of S4C's ascendancy under the aegis of its ambitious chairman, Prys Edwards.

Came with the appointment last month of the new BBC governor for Wales. For the first time, this worthy figure will not have a seat on the board of S4C as well. The new man to hold the slightly diminished but still desirable (at £16,330) part-time job is Roger Spencer Jones, the chairman of the Council of Welsh Training and Enterprise Councils. Not reappointed as governor was the controversial Tory Dr Gwyn Jones, whose term expired at the end of the year.

Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, apparently was willing to renew him, but the Welsh Office was not.

In November the Broadcasting Council for Wales, which oversees BBC Wales, pleaded with Mrs Bottomley to think again about the S4C link. The BBC Welsh governor has always sat on S4C's board because of BBC Wales's statutory obligation to make for S4C ten hours a week of programmes in the Welsh language. Last year this gift (paid for by your licence fee and mine) was worth £17.3 million.

She did not relent. On December 13, Sir Christopher Bland, the BBC's Chairman, wrote to her to voice his disappointment. Looking ahead to the future when BBC Wales and S4C might each operate separate digital commercial channels (the ostensible reason for the removal of the BBC's man from the S4C board), he said "it would be a grave mistake" if BBC Wales were to come to be regarded "as being somehow less Welsh" than S4C.

But Welshness costs money. BBC Wales is much the poorer of the two. Sianel Pedwar Cymru, to give it the name with which its operators answer the telephone, has £72 million a year to spend on one television channel aimed exclusively at Wales. In contrast, BBC Wales has £49.6 million a year to finance Radio Wales plus two television channels which, it fondly hopes,

will sometimes be national in its reach.

Declaring my interest once again, (Welsh husband, Welsh house), I very much hope that BBC Wales will get more on the national network this year than last year's measly eight hours. One has to remember that not everything made by BBC Wales sounds Welsh, such as Jan Morris's recent travel documentaries. There's some good stuff on the way from Cardiff, including *Tiger Bay* and *Drovers Gold*. May one of them catch on.

Poor Cartoon television. Just when it thought it was going to shed its reputation for vulgarity, it came up with *The Monarchy* — *A Nation Decides*. Watching this was like watching the social-climbing matron spill her big night out by drinking from the finger-bowl. This rich, unloved ITV company will have to settle for the populist medal unless it enlists the services of a professional image-changer. But not Max Clifford.

The Prince of Wales has made a more original choice for his makeover wizard. He has snared for his new press secretary the young (well, 30) man who quietly turned the Press Complaints Commission around and let all the credit go to the commission chairman, Lord Wakeham (now reappointed until 1999).

The skilled and discreet Mark Bolland, director of the PCC from 1991 to mid-1996, managed to quieten cries for new legislation to curb the press and to make the PCC seem capable of being dealt with, while keeping the newspapers in line.

In moving to accentuate the positive side of the Prince, Bolland and crew are on the right track. They could make more of one of his greatest assets: to speak English beautifully. They might help further by reminding the heir to the throne of that wise tip from John Kennedy's book: never put on a funny hat. When given one by whomsoever — cowboys, Boy Scouts, emirs or Maoris — the trick is to admire it, hold it up for the photographers, then hand it over to your press secretary.

As I sat in my Welsh fastness over the holidays, nothing on television entertained me more than BBC2's documentary on the peregrine falcon, which our cat watched from start to finish, ears erect, nose up against the screen, head swivelling to follow the action. It was a kind of pornography for cats — naked chicks pecking their way out of shells, hawks tearing at raw pigeon meat. Our cat also rushes across the room to watch the Famous Grouse commercial. Are petfood manufacturers, I wonder, directing their advertising at the right target?



BRENDA MADDOX

Barclay brothers triumph

THE secretive Barclay brothers, owners of *The European* and *The Scotsman*, are believed to have had their complaint about invasion of privacy against the short-lived BBC media programme, *The Spin*, upheld by the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. The twins objected to the way a crew tried to visit Breconhou, their Channel Islands home, in 1995, and retained Geoffrey Robertson, QC, a leading media lawyer, to fight their case.

The adjudication, one of the first controversial decisions from the revived BBC under Jane Leighton, its new chairwoman, revolved around the tricky issue of whether a public interest defence — the public should be able to see how press barons conduct their lives — could be sustained.

Golden Skinner?

FRANK SKINNER, comedian, chat show host and presenter of the BBC's cult programme *Fantasy Football League*, could soon be trying



Skinner: a Capital job?

his hand as a disc jockey. He is badly tipped to be offered a show on Capital Gold should the station succeed in its bid for the single remaining and much-coveted local radio slot in London. Twenty-five consortiums are competing for the licence, which will be awarded by the Radio Authority tomorrow at 5pm.

Capital Gold is promising to beef up its humour content by recruiting Skinner and "big names". It is allowed to move from its current crackly AM frequency.

As for Skinner, he, presumably, is hoping to beef up his bank balance — last year

Chris Tarrant, Capital Radio's star presenter, signed a three-year contract reported to be worth £3 million.

IN A rare coup, the BBC has poached Rebecca Segal, from BSkyB. Ms Segal, an American, has for four years acted as the satellite television company's eyes and ears in the United States. She will now be charged with spotting potential US acquisitions, marketing BBC programmes in America and identifying new co-production opportunities for the Beeb.

Flying the flag

HOW cheering that Prince Edward — who prefers to be known in media circles as plain Edward Windsor — is abroad flying the flag for the British television industry. The Prince — whose production company, Ardent, last year admitted that it had lost £1 million in its short lifespan — is leading the contingent of British programme-makers at the conference of the National Association of Television Programme Executives in New Orleans this week.

"Great Britain produces some great television," Mr Windsor says. "More and more of which is being enjoyed by audiences around the world."

Perhaps overseas audiences will appreciate a screening of



Edward: New Orleans trip

Mr Windsor's own documentary about King Edward VIII, his great-uncle, which, famously, skated over the great man's Nazi interests. Alternatively, they may favour *Annie's Bar*, Ardent's sitcom for Channel 4, which was axed after one series.

Cosy Whicker

THE decision by Bruce Gyngell and Yorkshire Tyne Tees Television board to replace *Hollywood Lovers* and its discussion of vaginal cosmetic surgery with a repeat of *Whicker's World* Turns Again has apparently done it

scant commercial harm. The company claims that ratings in the area were only a couple of percentage points lower for its cosy repeat than for the rest of the network.

First aid

HIGH STREET charity shops could be in for a bonanza, thanks to cost-conscious LWT programme-makers, who turned to a local Oxford store when seeking props for *Staying Alive*, its cut-price nurses drama series, which made its debut last October.

The strategy clearly worked because the series moves next week to production of a 13-part sequel, despite achieving what can only charitably be called average ratings of six million, and a peak of 7.5 million at 9pm on Fridays.

The fact that the programme has been recommended by the BBC is itself significant, suggesting that ITV is now prepared to give promising series a second chance, and an opportunity to develop, even if they have not scored high ratings first time around. The view at the Network Centre is that because the show was up against hot competition from the BBC's *Shooting Stars*, its ratings were reasonable.

The new series will most likely reappear on Saturday nights. In pursuit of stay-at-home women viewers.

Spending to save money

SOME PEOPLE might think that adfolk already have enough corporate benefits, but now a loyalty card enabling them to claim discounts at their favourite eateries, bars and emporiums has been launched.

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AFTER MUCH fretful negotiation with the BBC, BT has launched its long-awaited campaign featuring 11 former *EastEnders* actors and ac-

tresses. The commercial has Lesley Dean, alias Sharon, phoning other stars such as Leslie Grantham (*Dirty Den*) and Tom Watt (*Lady*) to organise a get-together. It is aimed at promoting BT's Friends and Family scheme, which now offers a discount on ten numbers rather than just five. Apparently, the problem concerned the stars' appearing in character, touching on the age-old thorny issue of breach of copyright.

ONE adman is doing his bit to prove that the industry does have a social conscience. Simon Tuke, a copywriter at Mellors Reay & Partners, which is based in Frith Street, Soho, wants to set up a scheme for leftover food from the area's restaurants and sandwich bars

to be redistributed to the homeless. To get things started, he is planning a fundraising party. "Agencies might mean that times are hard, but in relative terms they are obviously very prosperous organisations," he says.

DISPIRITING news for politicians: it seems they may be fair game for admen. The Freedom Association complained about an advertisement in *Tribune* for a T-shirt bearing a picture of the Prime Minister and the words "Wanted. For indecision and sedition. The Grey Man. Approach with cynicism." The association claimed that the ad sought to damage Mr Major's credibility and was in breach of the Advertising Standards Authority's rules on protection of privacy. But the ASA ruled that the portrayal of Mr Major was not one that readers would find adverse.



John Major: fair game for admen

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Hello! fights to stay top

Hello!'s most successful issue was Gazza's wedding. Carol Midgley says royals might be faded out to beat off growing competition

Last year was a peculiar one for Maggie Koumi, the much lampooned editor of *Hello!* magazine. In the space of six months she achieved record sales, managed to fall out with her international interview-getter, the Marquessa de Valera, and ended 1996 by spectacularly admitting to a roomful of rival editors that she personally would not have given coffee-table space to *Hello!*'s most successful issue ever — Paul Gascoigne's wedding.

This year also promises to be a defining one for *Hello!* and for the rest of the celebrity magazine market. In 1996, three new titles — *Here!*, *Now* and *Enjoy!* — emerged and *OK!* transformed from a monthly to a weekly, resulting in five magazines scrambling for a bite of the pie. Latest circulation figures suggest that only *Hello!* and *OK!* have significantly put on sales, and 1997 seems set for a head-to-head between the two titles, both of which claim to be the best friend of the rich and famous.

Industry insiders are especially interested to see precisely how *Hello!* will fight off the new pretender to its throne. Last year Koumi made no secret of the fact that she thought the Gazza showcase was too downmarket for a *Hello!* front cover, even though it sold almost 650,000 copies — an all-time high. (Soon afterwards, the Marquessa, who set up the deal, announced she was leaving.) So it is particularly intriguing to see that last week's issue of *Hello!* features not a royal christening or an aristocrat's engagement party — the trademark of the *Hello!* we know and love — but the wedding of an actor from *Brookside*, the Channel 4 soap opera.

"The *Brookside* cast celebrate the wedding of John 'Bing' Burgess," trumpets the front-page headline heralding eight pages of glossy photographs of the entire cast. John Burgess, 63, it tells us, plays *Brookside*'s "well-intentioned husband" David Crosbie. But it is really the stuff we have come to expect from *Hello!* "Brookside" is a very good, hard-hitting soap about the lives of several families in Liverpool," said one insider. "It is watched by about six million people a week but I would guess that very few of them are traditional readers of *Hello!*"

It could also be that Koumi has started to listen to the critics. Last year the paparazzi's favourite Ulrika Jonsson popped up to tell *The Guardian* she was bored with the Princess. She is very aware that we are a highly popular magazine whereas a while ago she only had *Hello!*



Hello! is still the cream of the crop, but is it going downmarket in order to fight off competition from the five other celebrity magazines?

zi's favourite Ulrika Jonsson popped up to tell *The Guardian* she was bored with the Princess. She is very aware that we are a highly popular magazine whereas a while ago she only had *Hello!*

"We believe we have made our mark. In a recent episode of *Absolutely Fabulous* Joanna Lumley talked about *Hello!* and *OK!* fighting it out for pictures of Saffron's wedding. People now put us in the same bracket as *Hello!* The only thing I envy them is their circulation figures. I know that there is division within the magazine at the moment and a lot of staff are unhappy. To be honest I was amazed when Maggie Koumi said that she would not have bought the Paul Gascoigne edition. I have never before heard an editor saying she wouldn't buy her own magazine."

Ring, who took over as editor last autumn, added: "Look at our most successful edition ever. The cover featured pictures of Michelle Collins (Cindy Beale from *EastEnders*) with her new baby, and they were great pictures which our readers loved because she was someone they could identify with." "We also had a call from Diana, Princess of Wales, asking us to do a story on one

of her favourite charities, the Lighthouse Trust, and we were allowed access to the Princess. She is very aware that we are a highly popular magazine whereas a while ago she only had *Hello!*

Koumi, while apparently taking little pleasure in the Gascoigne scoop, recognised its commercial value and made the decision to run it after the Marquessa clinched the deal through the couple's hairdresser. *Hello!* is still very much the cream of the crop with regard to circulation. Its average weekly sales are just below

half a million and it has eight more pages than *OK!* But it has been accused of scraping the barrel for interviews (Barbi Benion, Sarah Biasini, Joaquin Cortes and Henrietta Spink have been cited as examples) and *OK!* is regarded by many critics as looking fresher and more modern than the *Hello!* format.

OK! sells fewer than 200,000 copies a week, but latest figures show it has increased by 9-10 per cent. Ring said that the fact that it had increased circulation when so many new titles had come on the market was crucial. "If *Now*, *Here!* and *Enjoy!* hadn't existed I think we might have overtaken *Hello!* by now," she said.

David Durman editor of *Now*, which is owned by IPC and calls itself "the smarter woman's weekly," said: "*Hello!* is changing in the sense that all magazines need to change over time. Just like there are probably only ten jokes in the world there are only about ten real cover stars and you cannot keep featuring them. You have to go for something new."

"The Gazza cover was a real sign of the times. It was a great sale for them and whether

Maggie Koumi didn't personally like it or not is not important. It is the fact she had the good sense to put it on the front."

Jane Ennis, editor of *Here!*, launched last June by Gruner and Jahr, said the *Brookside* cover was uncharacteristic for *Hello!* "It is an odd one for them and it must have taken a lot of persuasion to get the Spanish owner (Eduardo Sánchez) to run with someone he probably had never heard of."

"It is difficult to come up with a good cover every week and there are only so many

pictures and celebrities to go round so you have to allow them a little deviance. To be honest we see ourselves in a very different market. *OK!* is trying to take sales from *Hello!* but we take a much more newsy approach."

Both Durman and Ennis believe the market is big enough to sustain all the titles and are confident their products have a healthy future. But others are convinced that the fight for readers will bring about big changes at *Hello!*, which could mean saying "goodbye" to the Euro royals.

Thousands die, but is Diana flying out?

Our press is too insular and world news uneven, says Bridget Harrison

"HUNDREDS of immigrants disappear in the Mediterranean. Was it murder? Who even cares?" blasted *The Observer's* headline last Sunday.

The paper claims to have unearthed a tragedy bordering on biblical proportions in which 280 illegal immigrants — from Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka — were drowned at gunpoint by the drunk captain of their ship. Simultaneously *The Observer* suggests that readers and other newspapers will not give a damn, because the victims were "the wrong kind of dead" — they were "acting illegally, and they were black".

The remarkable silence maintained by all of Monday's papers suggests that *The Observer* was right. News reporters outside *The Observer* justify the silence by waiting for further evidence that the story is founded on fact.

The validity of the story aside, *The Observer* raises a pertinent issue: that the insularity of the British press means that coverage of world news is highly uneven. Furthermore, if Third World people are to make the news, their stories must be several times more horrific than those of their Western counterparts.

News must be sexy. From the page it must grab the reader with a headline and interest him or her beyond the opening paragraph. Newsmakers argue that the further from the reader's mind a country is in miles or perception, the harder it becomes to engage their interest because the news topic is too far removed from his or her reality.

Foreign correspondents battling to place stories from abroad must find a relevant spin to make the

news. For example, the experiences of a British aid worker abroad, or visits and campaigns by British celebrities. What relevance do the thousands crippled by antipersonnel mines in Angola have for us? Little until Diana, Princess of Wales, visits them.

In crisis situations, the British element to a story is further perpetuated by aid agencies and charities who work in the Third World. Relief agencies actively court the Western media to publicise their activities and generate donations from the public.

As a result, not only do we equate the Third World with disasters, but imagine that these are rarely resolved without our help. We are uninterested by the death of ten Indians because we have heard the story before. We are unsurprised by disastrous events in countries that seem frequently incompetent without Western aid.

Perhaps this situation would be remedied if newsmakers equated sexiness not solely with relevance, but with the ability to capture the imagination of the reader, no matter what the subject matter.

THIS is a quality lacking in *The Observer's* immigrant story. Skating over sketchy facts with sensationalism, the story loses much of its grit. A more sober approach, with the story run as a page lead inside, might have had more serious impact than the paper's shock-horror page one treatment.

● The author has written a postgraduate thesis on the role of newsmakers in the creation of Africa's media image, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

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As part of our New Year New Career series *The Times*, in association with Saville & Holdsworth, international leaders in assessing individuals and jobs, gives you a unique opportunity to receive your personal profile absolutely free. The three-page questionnaire was inserted in Monday's newspaper.

An interview used alone compares poorly with a selection process that uses more than one assessment method. This is why questionnaires, such as *The Times* personal profile, ability tests and management exercises, are used by more and more organisations, together with the interview in a "multi method" approach, often known as an assessment centre.

This provides a wealth of information about a range of skills such as numeric and verbal reasoning, oral communication, approach to teamwork and leadership potential, specific to the role, information crucial to help the employer make the best possible match between candidates and the demands of the job.

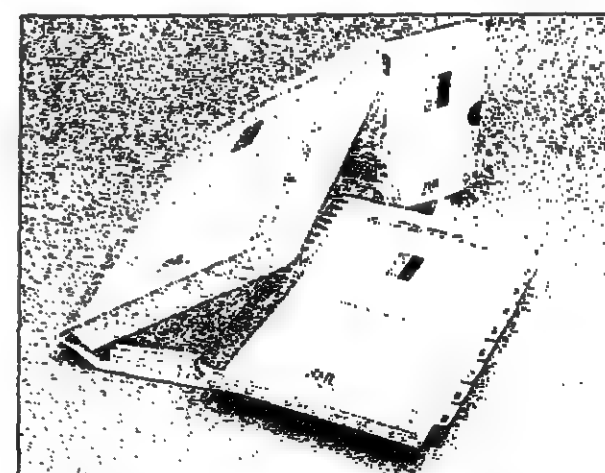
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Unchecked — the rise of the ranting columnists

Keith Waterhouse is calling for a cull of columnists. He believes there are far too many of the breed writing in today's national newspapers. It should, he says, start at the younger end, "particularly with those twitting young women with very little to say who are now given so much space by editors."

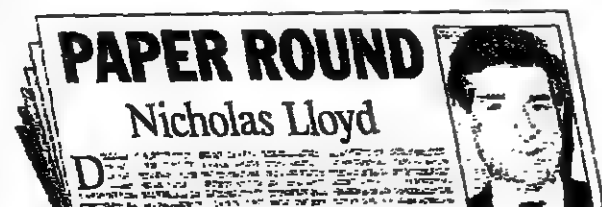
Waterhouse's tongue-in-cheek demand follows the sacking of Sir Peregrine Worsthorne last week from *The Sunday Telegraph* after 36 years.

As newspapers have grown faster and faster, there has certainly been a proliferation of columnists. Editors are constantly seeking the new, brilliant, stylish writer who may add sales to their newspaper — and they are willing to pay a great deal of money for the right person.

Richard Littlejohn, who conducts journalistic muggings for the *Daily Mail*, is reputed to earn £150,000 a year, and Tony Parsons in *The Mirror* an estimated £150,000.

Competition pushes columnists to become ever more opinionated, less willing to examine an argument coolly and intelligently. Public figures are either heroes or villains. Too often, uninformed ranting has become the order of the day, particularly in the pop tabloids.

Dominic Lawson, Editor of *The Sunday Telegraph* and sacker of Perry



Worsthorne, says he did not fire his best-known columnist because of a personal feud that has gone on for some years between the two. "Every column has a natural lifespan and Perry's had run its course," he told me.

Lawson doubts that columnists actually sell extra copies of a newspaper. "Mary Kenny was a very popular writer on *The Sunday Telegraph* and some readers have written to ask us to get Mary back. But I doubt that they are reading her in *The Express*."

"To grow the readership, you need differing voices who are not just chips off the old block, reinforcing the newspaper's own views. You don't want a ghetto of opinion."

Waterhouse believes that standards are plummeting. To be a columnist of quality, a writer must be a practised journalist, he says.

"He should have been a reporter, an accurate collector of facts. There are too many who don't know anything or anyone. They take a cutting out of a newspaper, they don't check facts, and they just comment. There's a

lot more to it than that." The *Daily Mail's* political pundit Simon Heffer has been doing a column for nine years and claims never to have suffered from a shortage of opinions. He hits hard, but claims that he only expresses political opinions.

Doesn't he sometimes fear a punch on the nose? "If you dish it out, you must be willing to take it. So I don't mind being called a prat in other columns," he says.

"I do feel strongly about the betrayal of the people by the Conservative Government, and I think this view rings true with *Daily Mail* readers." In January, 1991, in *The Sunday Telegraph* I wrote that John Major was not up to being Prime Minister, and he has not spoken to me since. But I don't express strong opinions for effect. I write what I do because I believe it."

The gentler columnists who specialise in wit and humour seem to suffer from more self-doubt and angst about their offerings than what I shall call the ranters.

Peter Tory of *The Express* says: "I am often up till four in the morning pacing around, agonising over what to write. My fear is almost like a Freudian dream. I have this notion of being naked in Oxford Street. I suppose in my column I am exposing myself to the readers. I sometimes write a sentence seven or eight times to make it easy to read."

Alan Coren of *The Times* has some sympathy for Tory. "The problem with humorous writing is that you never know if anyone is laughing. You must assess your audience accurately more than any other columnist. I try to think of *The Times's* readers as my peers, chaps like Waterhouse."

"I am the kind of Terry Waite or John McCarthy of popular journalism. I bang away on the radiator not knowing whether anyone out there is picking it up."

Worsthorne agrees that the spread of columnists may be out of control. "When I started in newspapers... opinion was expressed in leaders and editorials, anonymously."

For all the current provocation, however, few readers' letters are published disagreeing with columnists. Could it be that the modern reader has worked out that many of the over-the-top statements are not to be taken too seriously? They are simply part of the growth of the information sector of the newspaper industry.



THEATRE 1

Wave goodbye to \$10 million: a new book chronicles the perils of mounting a big musical



THEATRE 2

A Hong Kong boy's trials in an English public school receive mythic treatment in *New Territories*

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TOMORROW

How does Whitney Houston rate in *The Preacher's Wife*? Read Geoff Brown's review of the new movies

How to go for a song and lose a fortune

Benedict Nightingale on the hard work that goes into a flop musical

According to the director Mike Ockrent, it is like swimming through shark-infested waters with a bleeding toe. For the designer Robin Wagner, it means fitting together a thousand moving parts, any one of which may fail and force you to start again, an enterprise he compares to dancing on a bowl of bubbling soup which boils over when you least expect it. For the librettist Larry Gelbart, it is like house-training a dinosaur. Surely there is no genre more likely to drive people to frenzy, despair or outright smiles than the large-scale musical.

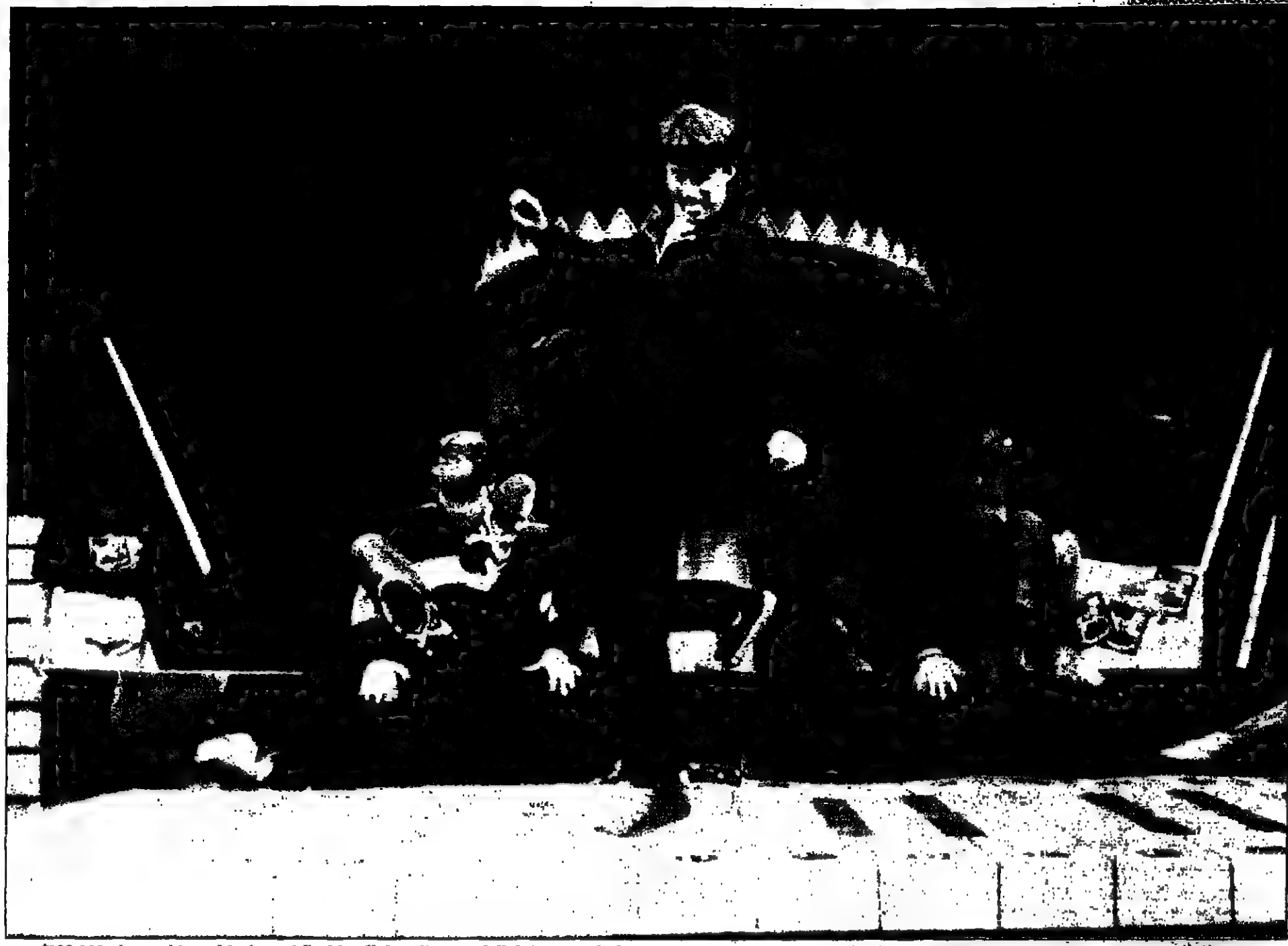
All these quotes come from Barbara Isenberg's fascinating log of the creation of *Big*, a musical that played for a few months on Broadway last year, costing and losing its backers more than \$10 million. Although published in America, *Making It Big* (Limelight, \$25) tells a tale that crosses national boundaries. It would certainly provoke wry smiles from Cameron Mackintosh, who recently reworked and relaunched *Martin Guerre*, or Andrew Lloyd Webber, who has just postponed the Broadway opening of his *Whistle Down the Wind* in order to rejig it, or Garth Drabinsky, who introduced new methods into the making of *Ragtime*, the \$10 million musical that opened last month in his native Toronto.

What Drabinsky did was organise "focus groups", in which members of the public joined people from the industry, watched workshop perfor-

mances of *Ragtime* and gave their reactions. This is a technique borrowed from Hollywood, where movies often change as a result of previews, and it had its creative effects in Toronto. For instance, more was made of Houdini and Evelyn Nesbit, two of the real-life characters in E.L. Doctorow's original novel, and more ragtime music was introduced.

But was there a danger of transferring creative control from Terrence McNally, Stephen Flaherty and their colleagues to some lowest common denominator of public taste? "No," Drabinsky says. "Generally what it did was confirm our own suspicions about what needed fine-tuning. But you can get so close to a show you lose perspective. And when 50 people tell you the same thing you have to say, wait a minute, maybe there's something to do. It's a lot cheaper than rushing around making changes when you're blasted by the critics."

Even so, some American critics felt that Doctorow needed further doctoring before the musical makes what my own eyes and ears tell me will be a successful transfer to Broadway later this year. As Mackintosh emphasises, and the makers of *Big* discovered the hard way, there is a vast gap between a nice performance in a rehearsal room and a show complete with sets, costumes and full orchestra. "There is no magic formula," Mackintosh says. "Hit musicals come from a myriad of start-ups and often from leftfield."



A \$100,000 piano with multicoloured flashing lights; 431 sound, lighting and design cues; 220 costumes: no wonder the musical *Big* lost its Broadway backers \$10 million

Who would have thought something as casually conceived as *Five Guys Named Moe* would do so well, he asks? Who would have predicted mega-success for his own *Cats* or *Les Misérables*? Conversely, *Porgy and Bess* was an initial failure, and *No, No, Nanette*, the biggest hit of the 1930s, so worried its American impresarios that they opened it in London before New York. *Oklahoma!* was frantically reworked at the last moment and, only days before its West End triumph, *Oliver!* was widely tipped as a disaster.

But Mackintosh does think it a pity that, at least in England, pre-London runs for big musicals are becoming a thing of the past. Had he opened *Martin Guerre* in Manchester, as he had

planned, he would doubtless have seen that the plot was less coherent and well-motivated than it needed to be. As it was, the radical improvements he made cost £1 million and made Homeric demands on the cast, who rehearsed one *Martin Guerre* while playing another.

The evidence of *Big* is that workshops can tell even the professionals into a false sense of security and that regional try-outs can mend but, finally, not make. Maybe there was something flawed in the very notion of giving the Broadway treatment to the Tom Hanks movie about the 12-year-old who finds himself in a grown-up body, job and relationships: maybe not. But the producer who warned that *Big* was too big for the theatre was right. The one who said he had never

found capital easier to raise, and persistently radiated optimism, was sadly wrong.

Without its month in Detroit *Big* would have been a famous flop. Instead of what I found it, a diverting show in sometimes dubious taste. There were vast, complex sets, 431 different sound, lighting and design cues, and 220 costumes for a cast of 31. There were elaborate props, most ominously a \$100,000 piano with multicoloured lights meant to flash in sync with performers dancing on its keys. That often went wrong in Detroit, but then so did almost everything else.

Was it a coincidence that a

convention of witches was being held in the hotel where the company stayed? Probably. But previews were cancelled. Sets failed to move, slid "as if through Jello", or collided. The men's loo in a bus station scene went crashing into a toyshop. An accident on a roller-coaster put an actress in hospital. The leading man, Daniel Jenkins, had to have a knee operation. "Think Vietnam," said an actor with four fast costume changes to make.

The show's beginning and the end of each act were endlessly changed. People were told not to learn replacement songs they had just been

given because they were already being rewritten. No fewer than 41 numbers were ditched. David Storey, the lyricist, talked of "a heart transplant with the patient awake". Richard Maltby, the composer, felt like a "boat being bombed. Of the vital opening song Storey said: "Put Richard and me in a room with a piano and three monkeys with a typewriter for the age of the universe, and it's just possible we might get it right before the monkeys type *Hamlet*."

Yet there was optimism, and a \$1.3 million marketing budget, when a radically revised *Big* made a delayed Broadway opening on April 28, just before the qualification date for the 1996 Tony awards. The show got a rave review from the all-important *New York Times*, but its troubles were

not over. After reading Isenberg's book you thank God the Olivier Awards do not obsess the British in the mad, cheering way the Tonies do. Americans *Big* was not nominated for best musical, and although it ran 200 performances, never recovered from the flop.

Pity director Ockrent, who felt like a bogey with his hands tied, behind his back, not knowing when the next guy would whack him. Pity his team, who gave months of toil to a project in which they generally believed. But the choreographer, Susan Stroman, drew the right conclusion when she said: "Until you have it onstage you just don't know." She might have been forgiven if she had gone further: "Try something easier, like rebuilding Russia."

A heart transplant with the patient awake

THEATRE: Opening show of the London International Mime Festival

Portraiture with a cleft palette

The Belgian company *Mossoux Bonté* (at the Purcell Room) opens the London International Mime Festival like the flap of a letter-box. Through it we see a beautiful woman, sliced off at the waist, her face in profile, one hand pointing skyward, the other playing sensually with her neck, posing as if for a portrait. The rest of the stage is smothered in black. An electronic soundtrack rumbles with industrial menace. The woman begins to twitch like a puppet on a string.

Suddenly, in a small square eight feet above her, appears the head of a medieval cleric, staring straight into the mouth of a large halibut. A clue perhaps to what is unfolding? Or merely the fact that no self-respecting mime festival can possibly be without its stuffed fish and inscrutable programme notes.

THE scholarship boy about to return to England after his Hong Kong holiday takes a last look at his birthplace: views are projected onto the giant white T-shirt that serves as a screen, black and white views like all the others we have seen there, but last of all comes the Union Jack in full colour. The boy stares ahead, says nothing, the lights go out.

An image of his uncertain future here in the land of the blind, blight and screw? Perhaps, but doubts as to Hong Kong's future when Peking takes possession is wrapped up in the image as well. 1997, the next production by Yellow Earth Theatre, will explore the effect of the handover on this country's Chinese community, but the exploration will need to reach greater depth than this play achieves.

David K. S. Tse created an excellent children's play, *The Magic Paintbrush* (worth looking out for on its next tour), and made a fine job at Leicester Studio recently of David Henry Hwang's strange, elegant and tough *House of the Sleeping Beauties*. But his story of a

The blacked-out stage continues to light up like an advent calendar, revealing luminous heads and truncated bodies visible through different-sized picture frames.

The inspiration for *The Last Hal-lucinations of Lucas Cranach the Elder* is the 16th-century German artist who famously painted Martin Luther and some exceptionally fine nudes. It is a selection of his portraits which Mossoux Bonté dismembers and brings to life, exploring the tensions between the subject and composition, light and dark.

The genteel sitters, dressed (and sometimes undressed) in period costume, strike odd iconic poses. A heroine, Joan

of Arc perhaps, flirts dangerously with a sword, one breast exposed. A woman, in an early version of a chef's hat, reclines like Manet's naked Olympia in a low, rectangular frame.

And a naked male torso, lit like marble, is caressed by two women to the sound of an amplified kazoo. Their trapped bodies and repressed desires make them sway and touch themselves with fluttering fingers.

For brief moments this animated gallery can look beautiful, intriguing, even at times startling. But Mossoux Bonté's efforts to use the medium of theatre to expose the limitations of painting is better as a concept than as drama.

The way the pictures are

framed, and how the subjects relate, is bereft of useful meaning. Their silky semaphore — cramped arm movements and clawing hands — is tedious rather than mysterious.

Only in the rare instances when two performers combine for a double portrait, such as the dancing nude torsos of Adam and Eve, does a stray ray of wit pierce the rarefied gloom.

And only at the end, when the five performers break out of their paintings, slowly traverse the stage, and threaten to invade our space, does Mossoux Bonté generate a genuine frisson of confrontation. It is too little, too late. I did not see any art historians jumping out of their seats shouting Eureka!

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

Puzzling Chinese lesson

New Territories Oval House

bright boy sent from a farm in the New Territories to an English public school follows too thinly-sketched a path. Tse adds mythic weight by introducing scenes from another journey westward, that of the Monkey King and his adventures with Piggy, the Priest and one other. These are played with grace and agility, but the resemblance is little more than geographical.

The school bully (Paul Courtenay Hryu)

turns into Piggy, Michelle Lee plays the desired schoolgirl and the priest, and Adrian Pang is the observant schoolboy and the dashing Monkey. Paul Tsang, the fourth member of the company, mostly sits at the percussion but sometimes sings *Mister Sandman*, totally inexplicable behaviour unless you know that the fourth pilgrim's name was Sandy.

Elsewhere Tse's production does not require esoteric knowledge and he draws attractive performances from his principals, notably the watchful gravity of Pang and the grief Lee shows in her playing of the young sister left behind in the ricefields.

The use of chairs, screens and an inverted umbrella hung with lanterns is accomplished but what actually happens to the boy in his English school — hit by bully, attracted to girl, wins prize, confused by puberty — lacks an equivalent novelty of detail to give the events a necessary freshness.

JEREMY KINGSTON

THE TIMES

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هكذا من الأصل



HERITAGE

The V&A is the perfect suitor for the Public Record Office, says Marcus Binney



JAZZ 1

From the virtuoso saxophonist Julian Argüelles, confirming his reputation as a top improviser

THE TIMES ARTS



JAZZ 2

... to the silken-voiced Christine Tobin: the Babel Festival offered a tour of the current scene



RISING STAR

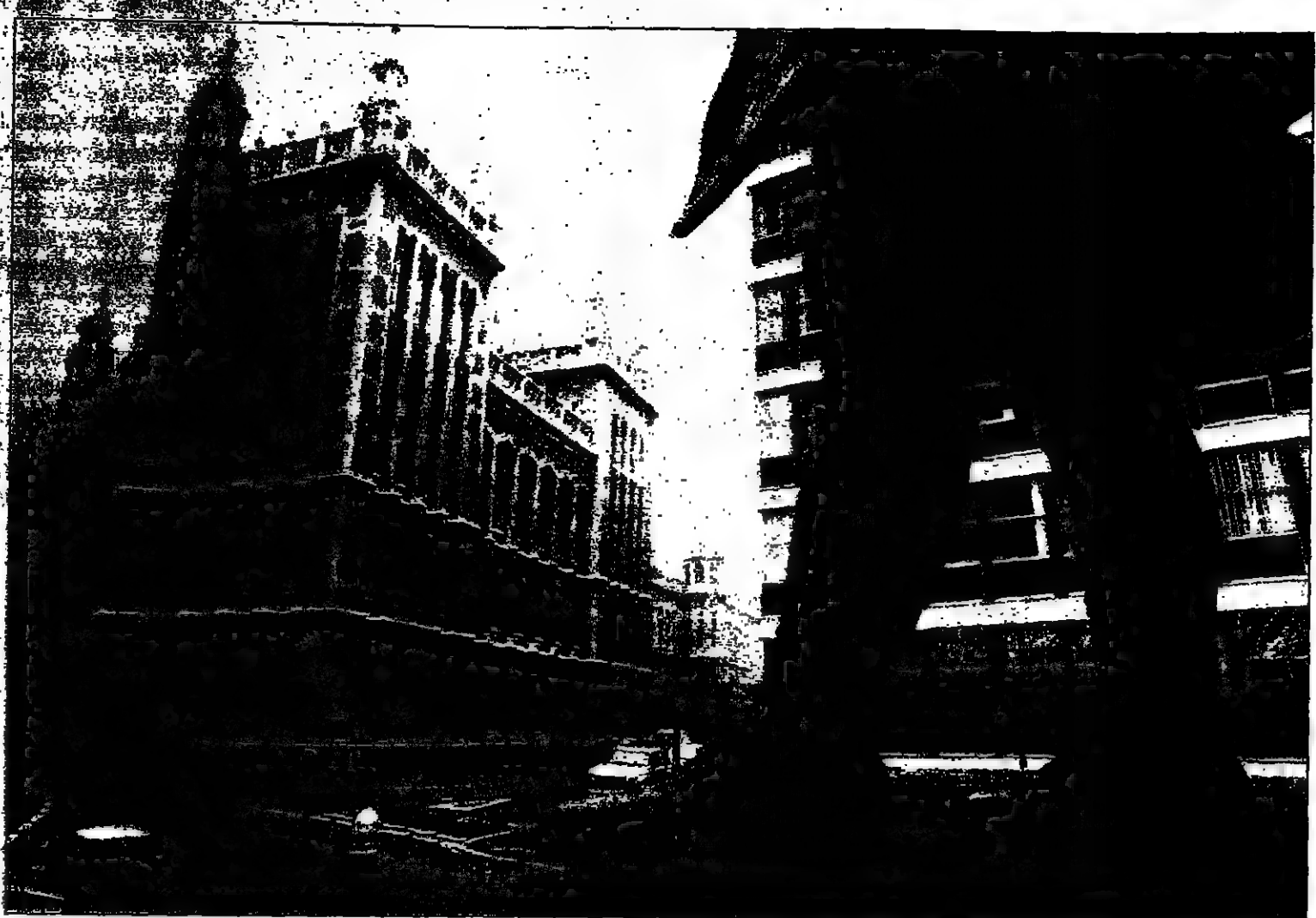
His first film is released this year, he is directing for the BBC — and Shane Meadows is still only 23

Who should win this Victorian beauty?

HERITAGE
The V&A is the perfect suitor for the Public Record Office, says Marcus Binney

First Greenwich, then the Admiralty, and now the Public Record Office. The future of this mighty Victorian pile in London's Chancery Lane is a key test of the Government's commitment to its own guidelines on the disposal of surplus historic buildings.

The PRO was built by the Victorians to house something even more important than the Stone of Scone or even the Crown Jewels. It was to be the storehouse of the very stuff of the nation's history, beginning with the Domesday Book and Magna Carta. The question now is: should the PRO be sold off to the most profitable use — as barristers' chambers, perhaps, or a Knightsbridge-style "apart-hotel" — or can it once again become a great library and archive, which would put its thousands of miles of sturdy slate shelving straight back into the use for which they were intended?



The mighty exterior of the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, with festive turrets inspired by Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster Abbey. The former Rolls Chapel (right) would make an excellent exhibition gallery

The impetus for building the PRO came from the savage fire which destroyed the old Houses of Parliament in 1834. None of the older buildings in which the records were stored was fireproof. The site chosen was on the Rolls Estate just north of Fleet Street, but construction was repeatedly postponed as the cost of rebuilding Parliament spiralled.

Finished in 1850, the PRO is one of those buildings where a second architect brilliantly embellished what began as a austere building. Sir James Pennethorne, who was constrained to design a utilitarian building — "God of a kind true enough, but functional enough to have pleased Pugin if he had seen it," wrote Sir Nikolaus Pevsner. It is to his successor Sir John Taylor we owe the magnificent Chancery Lane front, with its festive octagonal turrets inspired by Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster Abbey.

The PRO consists of 240 strongrooms on four floors, each with an iron door. The typical layout is a chamber 25 feet high with a spiral staircase leading to an upper level with a grating floor.

Pennethorne's biographer, Geoffrey Tyack, says that the dimensions were determined at the insistence of the London Fire Brigade. The weight of documents made it essential to use iron in the structure. But in a raging fire iron would

buckle, so it was clad in brick. Even the shelves are of slate rather than wood.

The original idea had been to extend the present L-shaped building to form a quadrangle. But in the 1960s a huge increase in the number of researchers led to the construction of a new PRO at Kew, though the reading room at Chancery Lane continued to "see duty". The old papers were moved last month.

For once, the perfect solution exists. The Victoria and Albert Museum desperately needs more space for its million-volume art library, not only for an extra 15,000 volumes a year but to provide more seats for readers. "We have had to become much more restrictive about issuing readers' tickets," says the librarian, Jan van der Walmen.

The present options are expensive and short-term. They include filling in V&A light wells, excavating beneath the Pirelli garden and knocking about the Henry Cole wing. By moving the library to a new site, the V&A would achieve free circulation around the main courtyard at first-floor level, and could open up the present low medieval treasury to reveal its original soaring height.

The main objection to the

move comes from the museum's own curators. 90 per cent of whom recently told the director that they want the library to stay. For them it is a fantastically convenient tool. They can browse in the stacks and take books to their offices when writing catalogues. In compensation, Waterman proposes a daily book delivery from the PRO.

Mary Jane Long, the specialist library architect retained by the V&A, says: "The PRO strongrooms provide security of valuable books without resorting to locked cases where mould can develop. The PRO's slats shelves come in every size deep enough for the largest art books." She believes that the awkwardness of the strongroom mezzanines can be overcome. "Electric trolleys with a scissors lift could rise up to the upper level at the press of a button."

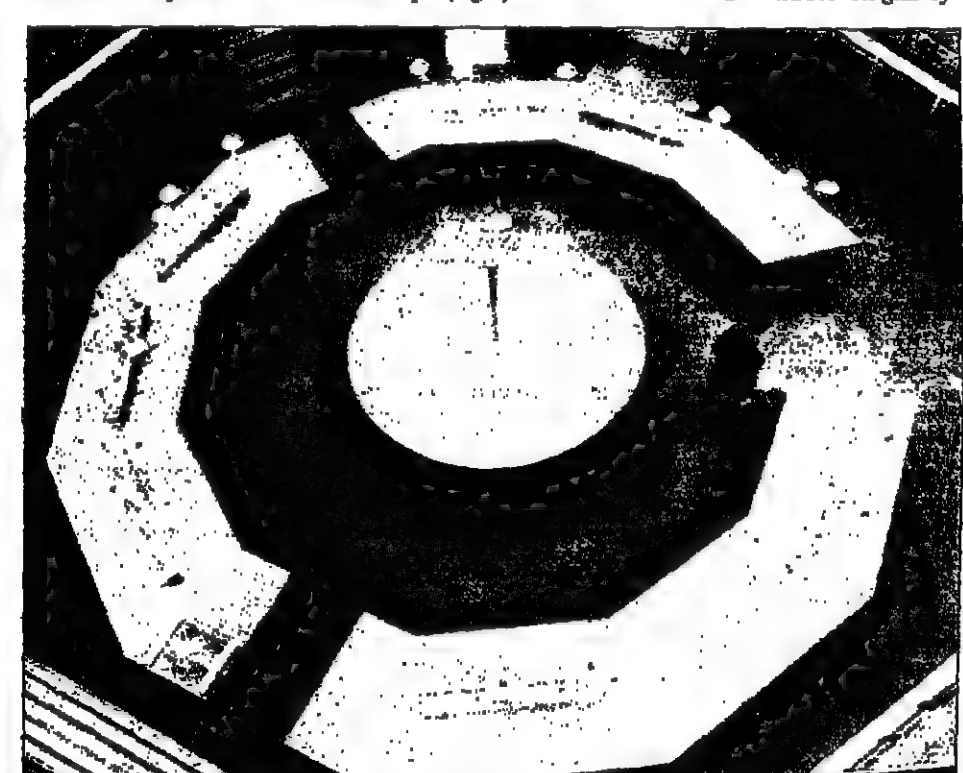
The one facility the PRO building lacks is a large 200-seat reading room, but English Heritage has agreed that this can be discreetly constructed in a sunken area to the north, now filled with huts.

The PRO's splendid octagonal reading room, which houses 30 or 40 readers, would become a library for the museum's rare books. The former Rolls Chapel, with wonderful stained glass, would make an excellent exhibition gallery devoted to the craft of the book.

The problem is that the V&A is a penniless institution de-



One of the PRO's 240 strongrooms, each 25ft high with an iron door and a spiral staircase leading to an upper level. Right, the octagonal reading room



JAZZ: Chris Parker on the Babel Festival at Blackheath Concert Halls

Oliver Weindling's Babel label (founded in 1994) has pledged itself to provide "a diversity of entrancing new music from innovative musicians". Gradually the label has lived up to its name by accumulating an increasing number of musical dialects. Now it has promoted its first live festival.

The youngest of the label's artists, pianist Richard Fairhurst (21) and drummer Tim Giles (16), the nucleus of the Hungry Ants, were joined for the weekend's first concert by the ubiquitous Steve Watts (bass) and regular collaborator Rob Townsend on saxophones. Like the music on their eponymous debut album, the Hungry Ants' hour-long set, comprised entirely of Fairhurst originals, revealed a considerable debt to one of the pianist/composer's earliest champions, saxophonist John Ballamy. Townsend's plaintive, attractively wispy tone combined perfectly with Fairhurst's fluent, lyrical piano, and the disciplined exuberance of Giles — anchored by the rock-solid Watts

Instrumental polyglots

—ensured that the pill was not over-sugared.

Bromley's favourite son, Billy Jenkins, characteristically took this process to extremes with his set, featuring his Voice of God Collective supplemented by the Fun Horns of Berlin. His fractured irreverence and determined non-conformism tend to obscure his considerable musical gifts, but the time for his inimitable brand of knockabout irony might be dawning.

The Fun Horns themselves — saxophonists Thomas Klemm and Volker Schlott, trombonist Jorg Huke and trumpeter Rainer Brembecke — range freely between Palestrina, minimalism, free jazz and funk, and they opened the second day with a virtuosic but informal display.

Such uncontrived eclecti-

cism is Babel's hallmark, so the label provides a natural home for Orquestra Mahatma, a trio comprising Stuart Hall on various guitars and violin, bassist Thad Kelly and percussionist Paul Clarvis. In an hour of homespun but surprisingly controlled music, they visited Brazil, Cuba and various points east, incorporating everything from gypsy music to the traditional Golden Slumbers.

Steve Watts, and plays anything that might be considered suitable for the functions referred to in its title. On this occasion they applied their light, wryly ironic touch to material ranging from *Tiger Rag* through a fox-trot (*Puttin' on the Ritz*) to a quickstep medley of *Lady Be Good* and *Johnny B. Goode*.

Like this quartet, the Recyclers — pianist Benoit Delbecq and guitarist Noel Akchoti — depend heavily on Argüelles's deft but pounding drumming style to centre them while they explore terrain including free improvisation, semi-abstract sound sculpture and tightly organised, occasionally almost lyrically impressionistic original compositions. They employ a variety of techniques, from prepared piano to industrial guitar noise, to achieve their extraordinary textural and rhythmic heterogeneity.

After such wild adventures, singer Christine Tobin's festival-closing set, despite embracing everything from Joni Mitchell and Nina Simone songs through a deliciously smooth *Embraceable You* to her own highly innovative compositions, seemed almost conventional. In all these modes, though, she employed the silken, intimate strength of her voice to great effect, turning in a performance in which emotional depth and sophistication were unfussily conveyed by her characteristic technical prowess.

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

SHANE MEADOWS

Age: 23.
Profession: Film director.

The story so far: *Small Time*, the 60-minute tale of crooks, lies and car boot sales which Meadows made in a week for just £5,000 (and acted in — he is pictured here as Jumbo, one of the leads), has been picked up by Electric Pictures for cinema release this year. The BBC has signed him to direct another of his scripts, *24/7 — The Church of Alan Darcy*, with "a really big name" lined up to play the title character, who starts a boxing club for underprivileged kids on a Midlands council estate.

A typical film-school graduate? Hardly. From the age of ten, he learnt about film by renting ten movies a week from a market trader. "The more serious side of things came when I started watching *Film on Four*. I've never had any formal training."

Directorial debut: "I made a spoof commercial at school, with me as a car salesman who tries to convince a bloke to trade in his BMW for a Morris Minor. I was hailed as a star by the pupils and a nutter by the teachers."

Chequered past: "I was a bit of a naughty lad on my photography course. They threw me off at the end of the first year." On the dole, he worked for nothing for a film training company, in return for the loan of video equipment on which he made 25 shorts in two years.

Professional philosophy: "I'm out to make films, not money." What if someone offered him the chance to direct a \$50 million epic? "I'd rather make 50 films for a million each in lots of different genres."



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The Medical Director, Pharma-Clam International (UK) Ltd,
The Beckenham, London Road, Axtex, Bexley, SE18 6BE. Fax: 0181 344 8943/5

SAVILLS

LETTINGS
NEGOTIATOR

We require a Lettings Negotiator for our new Barnes office. The successful applicant should have previous letting experience and a proven record.

Please send CV to:
Savills, Residential Lettings Department,
191 New Kings Road,
London SW6 4SW

EXPERIENCED
SECRETARY

£15,000 - £17,000 pa
Busy office, small professional firm (3 people)
Lots of typing needed
Excellent 60-70 wpm
Must be computer literate
Needs to be a confident, mature and flexible individual
Good organisational and communication skills
Would suit 30-40 year old
Please send CV to:
John Sharkey
6-7 Beaufort Street
London WC2N 6RU

PA and a
Secretary

Required by an established West End Chartered Accountants to who on a permanent and demanding position. Please send CV to: 414 Piccadilly, London W1A 1AB or Fax 0171 638 0083.



Education Unit - Administrator

£12,500 - £13,000 per annum

If you have proven administrative experience and strong secretarial skills coupled with an interest in Ballet or Education you are the person we are looking for.

This is a central role in the Education Unit providing full administrative support to the Education Team. Previous experience of Word and a clean driving licence would be an advantage.

Please send covering letter and CV to:
Rachel Seghers (Ref: 15/AEU), Personnel Manager,
English National Ballet, Marlborough House, 39 Jay Mews,
London SW7 2ES. Closing date for applications 31/01/97
English National Ballet is committed to Equal Opportunities

Top Legal Secretary

£22,000

We are a niche law practice with a high quality client base. You are an experienced and capable legal secretary who can provide top quality secretarial and administrative support knowing the legal and efficient production of accurate documentation and letters with clients. You will have a minimum of 10 years and be fully accurate. You will enjoy taking responsibility, using your initiative and be thoroughly trained with U.S. Office Professional 95 and E. Mail.

Please send a comprehensive CV together with a covering letter stating your current salary to: Joseph Harris by fax on 0171-736-3048

Hays Banking Personnel
SECRETARIAL DIVISION

EXCITING NEW OPPORTUNITY...

Berkley Square £8,000+ P/hr
Why not start the New Year with a new challenge? This highly prestigious London based associate of an international bank requires an extremely well presented first class Receptionist/Secretary to join their busy team. If you have excellent skills - typing speed of 50 wpm, experience of Word for Windows, and knowledge of Excel - SS upon typing and an abundance of energy and enthusiasm, you could be the person we need. In return you will benefit from the support of the team and the opportunity of a permanent position for the right person!
Call 0171 638 7003

POWERPOINT SECRETARY

£9,000+ P/hr

Our client, a major U.S. Bank needs your help! Working for three managers in the International Finance Division, your role will be heavily integrated towards producing important client presentations on Powerpoint. Essential for the position is minimum 2 years' secretarial experience, excellent systems knowledge (W4W, Powerpoint & Excel), SS upon typing and an abundance of energy and enthusiasm. If you desire a position in a friendly environment where your skills are rewarded with an excellent hourly rate please call now.
Call 0171 638 7003

PA/ADMINISTRATOR

£18-£21,000 + Benefits

EC1 Excellent opportunity for experienced PA to support Executive Director, IT Operations of a major global investment bank. The varied job content will keep you busy and challenged - duties will include involved travel bookings, managing diary and planning meetings/events as well as general administration for the team. Strong secretarial skills including W4W and Powerpoint required and experience at Director level preferable within banking. Excellent benefits package and long term prospects.
Call 0171 256 5798

BANKING SECRETARY

£17-£19,000 + Benefits

EC2 Our client, a prestigious international bank, seeks a lively secretary to support 4 Directors in Treasury. The successful candidate will be responsible for client liaison, extensive travel arrangements and expenses, organisation of meetings and events as well as producing reports and presentations. W4W, Excel and Powerpoint required. Excellent opportunity for long term growth, fast paced environment and great team to work for.
Call 0171 256 5798

41/42 London Wall, London EC2M 5TB.
Tel: 0171 638 7003, Fax: 0171 628 5057

Secretary

Small friendly insurance firm requires secretary for Managing Director. Good all rounder providing administrative skills with smart presentation, good telephone manner and skilled in W4W 6.0 with 65 w.p.m.
Salary £15,000 per annum.

Please fax/send CV to: Lorna Chetwynd
at Dawson Greenfield Group,
6970 Mark Lane,
London EC3R 7BS
Facsimile No. 0171 488 2727.
(No Agencies).

Wanted

for the growing firm of head teachers with a large international client base, someone to join our successful support team, working in an atmosphere that is informal, friendly and often hectic.

The ideal person should have a pleasant telephone manner, basic secretarial skills and a good working knowledge of windows. Training will be given on all other in-house systems.

We want someone with a high level of commitment to both their own career development and that of the company. Ideally, you will have plenty of time spirit and be willing to work hard and become a valued member of our organisation.

Starting salary £12,000 with early reviews - the right person will move up to £14,000 within 3 months. Hours 9.30am - 6.30pm.

For more information please call Julie McCarthy on 0171 404-089

Diamond House, 37-38 Hutton Gardens, London, EC1N 8PW

Tel: 0171 680 6806

La Crème de la Crème

Fax: 0171 782 7586

..City...City...City...City...City...City...City...City..

Marketing Secretary
Age: 21-26
to £18,000 + Bens

This is a rare opportunity for a secretary to join the Marketing Dept. of this prestigious UK Investment Bank, assisting a senior Executive in a 1:1 PA role using your shorthand and W4W. You will deal with clients in person and by phone every day. This role has the added dimension of assisting the Events Co-ordinator in every aspect of organising functions with the possibility of occasionally attending. Skills: 80/50/Windows. Please call Kia Felton-Smith.

Versatile PA
Liverpool Street
£22,000 + Bens

This prestigious, private American bank requires a mature and experienced PA to support their outgoing and enthusiastic UK Chairman. The position offers great variety, because as well as traditional secretarial duties you will be assisting the company accountant, utilising your administration skills and numerate brain. City/financial background desirable. Skills: 90/50/Windows and spreadsheets. Hours: 9.00-5.30/6.00pm. Age indicator: late 30s+. Please call Sarah Bart.

Banking PA
Operations
£27,000

Prestigious European Investment bank require a professional PA to support a high profile Director who is primarily responsible for staffing issues. This is an internally focused role involving extensive liaison at senior level. In addition to the secretarial support you will organise your own projects including compiling status reports, and attend management meetings. A commitment to excellence, as well as good Word for Windows and Excel are essential. Skills: 90/50. Age 25 to 35. Please call Amanda Cheeson.

Trading Floor
Senior PA
to £26,000 plus bens

A fantastic opportunity has arisen for an experienced senior secretary with financial experience to join this busy, professional team of traders. Working for two bosses you will be involved in presentations, client contact, organising functions and special events and juggling life in general. Essential requirements are an 'A' level education and skills of 80/60/Windows. Hours: 8.00-6.00. Age 24-34. Please call Claire Ashley.

Sales Assistant
£20,000

Dynamic and successful team of Equity Traders require a confident and highly organised assistant. You will be close to the action and will be involved with back up trading, organising roadshows and client lunches as well as co-ordinating the whole team. Essential requirements are a numerate brain and a flexible approach, with skills of 50wpm/Word for Windows/Excel/Powerpoint. Age 22-30. Please call Katy Burke.

Events Organiser
1 Year Contract
to £23,000

Experienced events organiser required for this high profile City company. Fully autonomous role in which you will act as project manager and provide your own secretarial/administrative support. You should be a self-starter with the motivation and drive to see things through from start to finish. Skills: 50wpm typing/wordprocessing. Previous experience in this field is essential. Please call Vanessa Mitchell.

Telephone: 0171-390 7000 Fax: 0171-390 2997

Telephone: 0171-390 7000 Fax: 0171-390 2997

Crone Corkill
Recruitment ConsultantsCrone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants**Worldwide Liaison**Executive Secretary
to £30,000 + benefits

GORDON YATES

The company: Global leader in corporate finance, dynamic, professional, expanding.

The role: Exec Sec/PA to internationally renowned business leader, London-based, with worldwide perspective.

The essentials: Stable, progressive record; PLC board-level experience; business/financial awareness. Preferred age 27-35 years.

Please call 0171-404 4400 or fax 0171-404 4400.

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Where could you be with Crone Corkill and AIR MILES?



Whether you are looking for a permanent job or enjoy being a professional temp, Crone Corkill helps you develop your career path. Sound WP skills and a positive attitude will earn you excellent hourly rates and unrivalled benefits like AIR MILES awards.

If you are looking for promotion, a promising career or a holiday in Peru, Crone Corkill and AIR MILES awards take you one step closer.

Together we'll get you there!

Multi lingual 0171-390 7000
Piccadilly Circus 0171-434 4512
Rank 0171-390 7000

Crone Corkill
Temporary Recruitment

INSPIRING CAREERS

to £30,000

15K - FAMOUS CLUB - Superb job for a highly motivated, well presented PA who enjoys organising and dealing with the rich and famous. Must be flexible with pressing work. Age 24+ - immediate start. Terms new.

20K (30K pkg) - INV. BANKING - Immediate start with outstanding salary for bright, confident, 'A' level working PA Sec. City centre office. 35-40 hrs week.

22K - STRICTLY 9.30 - Polished and confident PA Sec to work in exciting Executive Secretariat role.

25K - PA WITH A DIFFERENCE - Charming MD of highly successful op. is looking for a PA Sec with a unique personality who can bring a new dynamic to the office. Must have excellent organisational skills.

30K - WELL KNOWN CHAIRMAN - Demanding role for a superb professional PA to support a busy MD. Must have excellent organisational skills. 35-40 hrs week. Top salary for a PA Sec.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE SECRETARIES E

0171 468 0400

BODY SEARCH W.1

Major players in international recruitment are looking for a graduate secretary with fluency in French or German. You will be responsible for innovative, happy, professional temporary staff and volume typing. Upstairs - own parking, responsible and a chance to advance your career. 3 months experience. Age 25 - 30.

PARADISE FOUND W.1

Big Bonus, big pension, own car. Our favourite clients keep promoting secretaries to read another gem of a secretarial/PA position working in beautiful offices and being part of a humorous, busy, professional team for a very successful property investment co. (part of a PLC). Essential: accurate W4W, service motivated, willing to learn, confident, phone confident. 3 months experience. Age 18 - 25. c £ 12000.

PLEASE CALL 0171 973 7779

JIGSAW

Executive PA with French £20-25,000

Global Japanese Technological Corporation requires a bi-lingual assistant to work with their top man in Europe and 2 IT Development specialists. The role will involve drafting and translating documents using both English and French, co-ordinating worldwide travel, researching and designing progress reports together with general secretarial support. This would suit someone of graduate calibre, with a flair for software, whose first language is English. You should have great attention to detail and be confident working autonomously using Word, Powerpoint and ideally Excel and Access often to tight deadlines.

For more information please call Nicky Gale in the City on 0171 590 7000.

RECRUITMENT

HOBSTONES**MEDIA RECRUITMENT**

Judy Fisher Associates is London's leading media recruitment consultancy. We need a confident, pro-active sales consultant to join our vibrant in the media and a fair for marketing. Your day will be varied, involving client liaison, negotiating deals and placing candidates in the advertising industry. If you are 30ish, motivated, a good team player and have the motivation to run your own day please call our Generous salary.

JUDY FISHER ASSOCIATES
0471-437 2371
Recruitment Consultants

Choose an agency that looks at you, not just your typing speed.

If you feel that you have a little more to offer, introduce yourself to the Susan Hamilton Group by calling our Mayfair Office. We'll get to know you, before we suggest a career move. So you'll be in the best position to get noticed in the places that matter.

0171 499 5406

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

THE HURLINGHAM CLUB

SECRETARY/PA TO ESTATE MANAGER £15,000+

Vacied and demanding employment in support of the maintenance and development of the Club's extensive grounds and buildings. The successful candidate will be mature, personable and discreet and have the social awareness to liaise comfortably at all levels. W4W/Excel database administration. Fax CV to 0171 731 1289 or contact Amanda Harrison on 0171 734 8411.

Fax CV to 0171 731 1289

or contact Amanda Harrison on 0171 734 8411.

TRUE PA

£22k + bens

Senior Executive of top ranking world-wide org. needs capable, forward thinking PA who can multi-task and anticipate situations, cope with constantly changing priorities in a role involving extensive client liaison. High level of initiative as in telephone heavily 5. Flexible working. Ready 1/4. 80 wpm. W4W.

Call Harriet Daily on 0171 242 2278 (RMP ag).

WA

£20-22k + Bens

"IN SEARCH OF EXCELLENCE"

Based in stunning Mayfair offices, this exceptionally friendly and prestigious Executive Search firm requires an intelligent and polished Secretary to work for two charming Partners. Your personality and professionalism are essential. If you have a good eye for detail, take pride in your work and are a team player with first class skills then please call Jane Gandy to hear more about this unusual and varied role.

0171 225 1888

VICTORIA WALL ASSOCIATES

career moves

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANT TO WORK WITH THE MUSIC INDUSTRY \$16-18,900+ excellent commission

If you think quickly, react well under pressure, enjoy an ongoing challenge, have superb people assessment skills, consider yourself professional and flexible and have proven interviewing (within recruitment consultancy) and client management experience then you could be the person we need to join our established, fast moving Music Division. Your role will be to manage a continually growing and changing candidate database (high level of interviewing) and help recruit for the major names in the industry. Good computer - window skills are essential to keep pace with high level of office technology. Client targeting is not within the remit of this role. With the massive expansion of this area, excellent opportunities exist for a committed, motivated person.

Please apply to Cathy Cooper on 0171 292 2910 (direct line) or evenings 0800 489962

Sutherland House, 3-4 Argyle Street, London W1V 1AD. Tel: 0171 636 0411, Fax: 0171 434 0257

career moves

PERSONNEL OFFICER Large Media/Entertainment/Leisure Group \$16,000

An involving and consultative role for a qualified (or partly qualified) IPD person who wants to work for the organisation of a charity event. Assisting the Group Personnel Manager you will provide personnel advice to all group co's, re-write emp handbook etc. Some interviewing. An exciting opportunity to mould a new position. Must be able to give occasional see back up.

Please apply to Sheryl Karpel 0171 292 2905

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR

TV Organisation \$14,000

A six month contract is being offered to a keen administrator with good secretarial skills to work in a busy Personnel Dept. Must be very organised with strong communication/computer abilities.

Please apply to Kerry Ballard 0171 292 2907

Sutherland House, 3-4 Argyle Street, London W1V 1AD. Tel: 0171 636 0411, Fax: 0171 434 0257

WA

IN-HOUSE RECRUITMENT £21-23K+Bens

Superb opportunity to progress your career in recruitment. Working autonomously, you will be responsible for the recruitment of secretarial and support staff for this prestigious finance house. Proven interviewing/recruitment experience essential. IPD qualification an advantage.

HR ADMIN £23-28K

Superb development opportunity for a graduate HR professional to work for this prestigious US Management Consultancy. You will be responsible for all HR admin and policy development. Minimum 3 years experience in a professional environment essential, prof. within HR.

0171 225 1888

VICTORIA WALL ASSOCIATES

career moves

PERSONNEL OFFICER Large Media/Entertainment/Leisure Group \$16,000

An involving and consultative role for a qualified (or partly qualified) IPD person who wants to work for the organisation of a charity event. Assisting the Group Personnel Manager you will provide personnel advice to all group co's, re-write emp handbook etc. Some interviewing. An exciting opportunity to mould a new position. Must be able to give occasional see back up.

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Please apply to Kerry Ballard 0171 292 2907

Sutherland House, 3-4 Argyle Street, London W1V 1AD. Tel: 0171 636 0411, Fax: 0171 434 0257

WA

c.£20k

PA IN PR

Rare opportunity for an outgoing PA to join this prestigious PA/Office Manager who can manage the life of the office and will involve lots of admin and little secretarial although you do need good computer literacy (presentation experience pref) and shorthand ideally. Communication is the key - he's an enthusiast so you must be too and very good at it. If you're bright, used to working with highly professional and energetic people and you're smart, easy and cool (aged 30-40) call us for more info.

Please apply to Sheryl Karpel 0171 292 2905

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WA

c.£20k

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Please apply to Sheryl Karpel 0171 292 2905

Sutherland House, 3-4 Argyle Street, London W1V 1AD. Tel: 0171 636 0411, Fax: 0171 434 0257

WA

c.£20k

PA IN PR**Investment Banking**

to £21,000 + Top Bens

Professional PA required by Senior Director to help run a very busy desk. Lots of travel - so must be able to hold the fort! - confident communicator essential for client liaison. Strong sec skills. Call Sarah Turbott.

Tel: 0171 588 8999

Project Administrator

£18,000 + Bank Bens

A very varied role for an experienced secretary who wants total involvement; based on the trading floor, using spreadsheets. Its a young dynamic team - a really fun environment. Call Alex Goss.

Tel: 0171 588 8999

PA (1-1)

£25,000

To provide total secretarial support and to run the office for an extremely high profile City financier. Its very hectic, based on a trading floor and involves superb organisational skills. Call Emily Aldrich.

Tel: 0171 588 8999

Personnel Admin / Sec

£18-20,000 + Bank Bens

Prestigious international investment bank need a very well organised, proactive, polished, customer service administrator with sound secretarial skills to support a personnel manager. Call Emily Aldrich.

Tel: 0171 588 8999

Portfolio Assistant

£20,000 + Full Bens

Excellent opportunity - supporting 2 fund managers. Lots of scope, involvement and responsibility. Relevant experience and good spreadsheet experience essential. Call Emma Martin.

Tel: 0171 588 8999

COMPETITIVE EDGE

£25,000 Package

Could you thrive in the demanding atmosphere of the trading floor in a global US Investment Bank? Use your minimum of 2 years' banking experience to become extensively involved in the key team, reporting to the Head of Equity Sales. You will be producing presentations and reports to tight deadlines, managing a hectic diary and composing correspondence in a very frantic, highly charged environment. Your excellent communication skills will enable you to quickly establish the necessary rapport with the team and clients, and your achievement will ensure success in this competitive office. Shorthand, fast typing skills and familiarity with MSOffice given at a competitive level are essential.

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer. All applicants are positively welcomed.

0171 814 0800

Angela Mortimer

RECORD BREAKING OPPORTUNITY, SW1

£22,000

The young and dynamic MD of this high profile consumer organisation is looking for an exceptional individual to provide full PA and Office Managerial support. Flexible and motivated, you will be able to turn your hand to general personal administration, the supervision of staff and a broad range of secretarial duties as well as handling executive client contact. A sense of humour is a pre-requisite in this team oriented culture where you play a hand in your work. Previous experience of event organising, advanced MSOffice, fast typing and shorthand are all essential.

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer. All applicants are positively welcomed.

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Angela Mortimer

CONSULTANT'S PA

£23,000

An opportunity has arisen to join a prestigious, internationally renowned management consultancy based in the West End. Working as the PA to a senior, particularly successful consultant, you will be relied upon to produce reports, organise a frantic diary and manage numerous projects at once. You will have extensive contact with a variety of clients on a day to day basis and understand the value of a good service ethic. The ideal candidate will have at least three years' secretarial experience gained in a commercial environment, 60 wpm typing and will preferably know shorthand. In addition you will take pride in being a professional, career PA and feel comfortable in a busy office role. Please call

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer. All applicants are positively welcomed.

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Angela Mortimer

INSPIRING CAREERS

to £30,000

15K - FAMOUS CLUB - Superb job for a highly motivated, well presented PA who enjoys organising and dealing with the rich and famous. Must be flexible with pressing work. Age 24+ - immediate start. Terms new.

20K (30K pkg) - INV. BANKING - Immediate start with outstanding salary for bright, confident, 'A' level working PA Sec. City centre office. 35-40 hrs week.

22K - STRICTLY 9.30 - Polished and confident PA Sec to work in exciting Executive Secretariat role.

25K - PA WITH A DIFFERENCE - Charming MD of highly successful op. is looking for a PA Sec with a unique personality who can bring a new dynamic to the office. Must have excellent organisational skills.

30K - WELL KNOWN CHAIRMAN - Demanding role for a superb professional PA to support a busy MD. Must have excellent organisational skills. 35-40 hrs week. Top salary for a PA Sec.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE SECRETARIES E

0171 468 0400

MAINE-TUCKER

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

EDGWARE, MIDDX

Int. Music Co - PA to Chief Exec £20,000 + bens

Music to your ears? Read on! This world famous company are looking for a true PA to support their Group CEO; preparing information and documents for meetings, travel and office admin, high profile event organisation and providing all round assistance at top level. You must be focused, mature, aged 30yrs+, and have senior sec experience (good typing 65 wpm+ and shorthand at 50wpm+). Set up new systems and procedures, and have on an international basis in a very civilised and friendly office. This is a very special role so if you want to strike the right chord, call us now for more details.

18-21 Jermyn Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6HP. Telephone: 0171 734 7341. Facsimile: 0171 734 3260.

MAINE-TUCKER

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

ISLEWORTH

Exec Assistant to Chairman c£25k + profit share + pens + med

This Chairman is a 'major player' and wants to delegate as much as he can! He needs a seamless Assistant who will smooth the way ahead and deal with the important tasks that keep this multi-million pound business at the top of its field. It is a 1:1 role and will involve lots of admin and little secretarial although you do need good computer literacy (presentation experience pref) and shorthand ideally. Communication is the key - he's an enthusiast so you must be too and very good at it. If you're bright, used to working with highly professional and energetic people and you're smart, easy and cool (aged 30-40) call us for more info.

Please apply to Sheryl Karpel 0171 292 2905

Sutherland House, 3-4 Argyle Street, London W1V 1AD. Tel: 0171 636 0411, Fax: 0171 434 0257

MAINE-TUCKER

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

One in a million...

c£40,000 + banking pkg + Bonus

If you're looking for that amazing new job for '97 then this could be it. This very senior MD of a vast banking empire is looking for a supreme PA/Office Manager who can manage the life of the office and will involve lots of admin and little secretarial although you do need good computer literacy (presentation experience pref) and shorthand ideally. Communication is the key - he's an enthusiast so you must be too and very good at it. If you're bright, used to working with highly professional and energetic people and you're smart, easy and cool (aged 30-40) call us for more info.

Please apply to Sheryl Karpel 0171 292 2905

Sutherland House, 3-4 Argyle Street, London W1V 1AD. Tel: 0171 636 0411, Fax: 0171 434 0257

MAINE-TUCKER

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

Administrator/Secretary in SW1

c£20,000 + STL + med + lunch

Easy journey into Victoria? This job could be for you. This lively team who are part of one of the world's biggest organisations are looking for a 'mature thinking' individual with good knowledge of Microsoft Office. There is little sec work so you must have a flair for managing day-to-day admin, people and a busy boss. If you'd like to be appreciated for your talents and you're 25 yrs+ then call us for more info about this special role.

18-21 Jermyn Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6HP. Telephone: 0171 734 7341. Facsimile: 0171 734 3260.

Tel: 0171 680 6806

La Crème de la Crème

Fax: 0171 752 7586

OFFICE MANAGER
£24,000

A lynch pin position in this successful consultancy. Using your organisational flair you will orchestrate the office move, take responsibility for regular social events and oversee the smooth running of this dynamic west end office. For further information please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

2ND JOBBER
£20,000 basic

+ package + overtime. This cosmopolitan company is located in prestigious Mayfair offices and offers an extremely generous package and appealing work environment. Powerpoint skills, a strong personality and the flexibility to work long hours essential. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
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WEST END TEMPS
Secretaries and receptionists

• Top hourly rates, loyalty bonus and paid bank holidays.
• Immediate short and long term assignments; matched to your individual exp and skills.
For more information and friendly advice please telephone Emma, Jane, Sophie & Jo on 0171 499 8070

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

HOLD THE FORT
£22,000

Manage your own workload when your boss is away and set up this new office for a successful international shipping company. Your excellent secretarial and organisational skills will be appreciated by one of the nicest bosses you could wish for! Free parking. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

PROJECTS
£24,000

Knowing the latest information on projects and responding to problems by re-prioritising will make you invaluable to this busy senior executive who manages an established legal practice. Commercial background preferred. 60wpm typing. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

ADMINISTRATOR/SECRETARY
£18,000 + exc BENS

Proactive City administrator/secretary with good organisational skills to work with European Banking/Finance team. Must have 50wpm, Word, Excel and good interpersonal skills for this varied position. Call 0171 577 6777 Fax 0171 577 5779

MIDDLETON JEFFERS
RECRUITMENT LIMITED

SALES & MARKETING SEC.
£20,000 + BENS

A busy and exciting sales sec. role for a busy and varied role with Sales & Marketing department. Must have 50wpm, Word, Excel and good interpersonal skills for this varied position. Call 0171 577 6777 Fax 0171 577 5779

MIDDLETON JEFFERS
RECRUITMENT LIMITED

SNR PARTNER'S SEC
£20,500 Baker St

One of the UK's leading independent firms of Chartered Accountants seeks an experienced Secretary with both shorthand and Audio skills to assist in the running of the office. Must have 50wpm, Word, Excel and good interpersonal skills for this varied position. Call 0171 287 2044 Fax 0171 287 3717

MIDDLETON JEFFERS
RECRUITMENT LIMITED

PA/OFFICE MANAGER
£28,000-£30,000pa

An outstanding PA who must have worked in the senior/finance environment of this level, is sought after to run the office of two top MDs in high profile PA/PR position. Must have 50wpm, Word, Excel and good interpersonal skills for this varied position. Call 0171 287 2044 Fax 0171 287 3717

MIDDLETON JEFFERS
RECRUITMENT LIMITED

PA TO CHIEF EXEC
£23,000

An experienced Secretary with shorthand and Audio skills that are impressive but who will also be a PA who will be able to run the office of two top MDs in high profile PA/PR position. Must have 50wpm, Word, Excel and good interpersonal skills for this varied position. Call 0171 287 2044 Fax 0171 287 3717

MIDDLETON JEFFERS
RECRUITMENT LIMITED

Public Relations
max £17,000 aae

Specialist PR Consultancy, this job is unfailingly tough and not for someone in the least bit shy! You will need to be on your toes constantly, scheduling each stage of numerous press events simultaneously, whilst coping with all the routine elements involved in working for a small company. Setting up a press desk through to standing in line at the post office, whatever you do it must be done with the utmost efficiency. Minimal typing, this job is perfect for a strong administrator able to work without supervision or help.

Susan Doughty Recruitment
39A Curzon Street London W1Y 7BF
Tel: 0171-491 7911 Fax: 0171-491 7922

Legal or Medical Sec
Publishing to £20,400

Part of one of the UK's largest and most successful companies, involved in publishing and leisure, needs a Secretary familiar with legal terminology, or perhaps a medical Secretary wanting to make a career change. You will be working as part of a dynamic team and occupying the role of PA to the Legal Director based in corporate headquarters close to Warren St station. Happy to use audio and MS Word for Windows, your colleagues are all young and friendly and the benefits are great and include five weeks holiday and a meal allowance.

Susan Doughty Recruitment
39A Curzon Street London W1Y 7BF
Tel: 0171-491 7911 Fax: 0171-491 7922

Recruitment
Consultant

Mayfair based, established 1989, going from strength to strength, we recruit for a variety of West End companies involved in businesses such as Music, Magazines, Public Relations, Sport and Art and are now looking for one, possibly two, enthusiastic Consultants. High basic salary and generous commission plus profit share will ensure earnings of at least £25,000. Experience preferred but not essential. Call during office hours on number shown or after 7.00 pm on 0181 947 5405. CVs for the attention of Sue Doughty.

Susan Doughty Recruitment
39A Curzon Street London W1Y 7BF
Tel: 0171-491 7911 Fax: 0171-491 7922

Food & Wine
to £16,000 + profit related pay

Well known magazine needs a really good PA / Secretary who has a passion for food. Ideally your secretarial skills should be topped off with a culinary qualification and reasonable knowledge of / interest in wine. Stacks of variety on offer including responsibility for press liaison, compiling wine pages, organising small events as well as providing a truly faultless secretarial support to your demanding and high profile boss. Company is in the West End and offers up to £16,000 plus PRR, five weeks holiday and subsidised membership to gym.

Susan Doughty Recruitment
39A Curzon Street London W1Y 7BF
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Country Pursuits
to £24,000 + bonus

A varied role is offered to a competent self-starter with a small but established company involved in Management Consultancy and Executive Recruitment. In offices near St James's Park station, you will work for two people one of whom is the company's proprietor (he lives in Hampshire and travels country round). Refreshingly challenging bonus each working in different ways, one uses audio the other relies more on the telephone, so typing content fluently. You will juggle tasks including basic bookkeeping, office management, meeting VIP visitors, organising travel and liaising with Geneva office.

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ANDERSON HOARE

Dreamboat Boss!
£19,000

Feeling unappreciated? This extremely capable Finance Director needs a pro-active assistant to work alongside her. Minimal secretarial work, but you must be highly organised and have a bright, enquiring mind. She offers true involvement and the opportunity to progress within this fast-paced organisation. 1 years exp, 50 wpm, Windows, Excel & job Age 25+. 40 wpm+ Audio.

High Street Kensington,
Sloane Square, Green Park, City
0171 824 8521

DRAKE INTERNATIONAL

Sec to Dynamic Individuals!
£15,000

Working for 2 entrepreneurs in W1, you will have full involvement in the day to day running of the company and the opportunity to develop the role. Based in your own office in a superb environment, you will need to be organised, enthusiastic and have a bubbly and outgoing personality.

Call Amanda on 0171 240 3515

Client Service Manager
£20,000 plus exp. package

Your role will be to act as a client focused environment, providing a tailor-made service to meet your clients' needs. Assist in organising training courses and manage a team of support staff. Relevant experience required.

Call Marie-Therese on 0171 240 3515

PA to Managing Director
£18 - £20,000

Use your superior secretarial skills to support a young and dynamic MD, who started this company five years ago. Based in a beautiful premises in the City near to Liverpool Street, you will be encouraged to use your initiative and really get involved in the day to day running of the office. Essential an asset, along with an interest in IT.

PA/Secretary in the Art World
£15 - £18,000

A delightful opportunity has arisen to provide full departmental support with a major player in the international art world. You will become fully involved with the diverse activities and responsibilities of this team and the ideal person will need to be 'on the ball' with enthusiasm and initiative as well as confidence in yourself and your secretarial skills. Word for Windows and spreadsheet an asset. Smart corporate presentation a must.

Call Amanda or Jacqui on 0171 495 2927.

Call Amanda or Jacqui on 0171 495 2927

Choose an
agency that
looks at
you, not just
your typing
speed.

If you feel that you have a little more to offer, introduce yourself to the Susan Hamilton Group by calling our Mayfair Office. We'll get to know you, before we suggest a career move. So you'll be in the best position to get noticed in the places that matter.

0171 499 5406
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

TRADING FLOOR N 8

£18,000 to £25,000 + BENS

Various Sales Assistants and Senior Secretarial roles exist on the Trading Floors of major investment banks. Responsibilities include expense processing, organising client entertainment and arranging team travel. All roles require MS Office and strong interpersonal skills. Age 20-30.

Please contact Melinda Marks

Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd.
No. 1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 1242

LEGAL IN BANKING

£25,000 + MS + BENS

Working for a dynamic American lawyer in the W1 offices of a major Investment Bank, this role has a high administration content and requires extensive liaison with senior personnel regarding confidential issues. Legal or Banking experience using MS Office essential. Shorthand preferred.

Please contact Margaret Sorohan

Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd.
No. 1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 1242

ROYAL ALBERT HALL

PA TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE
£20,000

Dynamic Chief Executive of The Royal Albert Hall requires a rock solid PA with excellent administrative skills. This is a demanding role requiring previous senior level secretarial experience and a background in the Arts may be advantageous. Ideal PA needed, but applicants must be confident, strong communicators, with calm and personable nature. 50wpm typing, 50wpm+ and 40 wpm+ audio (see spec).

Interested applicants should contact the Recruitment Bureau

GROSVENOR BUREAU
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS
TEL: 0171 499 6556 FAX: 0171 493 6320

PA with Pizzazz - £25,000 + benefits

The Managing Director, Equity Sales, of a major City Bank needs a PA who is a brilliant organiser to run his life for him. Managing events for the trading floor you will be at the hub of operations: your quick wit and exuberant personality will enable you to thrive in this pace and ever-changing environment.

A levels or graduate with shorthand and good skills required. Age mid-late 20s.

0171 629 9323
DIRECTORS' SECRETARIES

SUMMERS
by day**SPECIAL RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS****PA TO PRESIDENT to £28,000 p.a.**

Two PA positions existing President of International PR company in a demanding, exciting and challenging role. You will really organise his office and him and be able to "think on your feet". World web presence, polished professional who is an excellent communicator and is used to a senior level role in a fast moving international environment. 50 wpm, 40 wpm, audio, Word for Windows & Powerpoint. Age 30+

60 typing, audio, Word for Windows & Powerpoint. Age 30+

Call Emma O'Brien on 0171 831 6868.

MANPOWER
There's more for you**PERSONAL ASSISTANT**

Central London - St. James's - to £22,000

Small, rapidly expanding strategy consultancy requires a competent, effective and flexible PA to support the senior consulting staff. Excellent technical skills based predominantly on Word and Powerpoint will be essential as will an articulate and confident telephone manner. A second European language is desirable. A well organised and capable candidate, used to the pressures of a small office, with good time management skills will enjoy the demands and rewards from direct involvement with this dynamic and expanding firm.

Applicants should send a full CV, together with salary details to Keith Allen at:

JKA RESEARCH MANAGEMENT
67 WOODSIDE LONDON SW19 7AF or FAX 0181 947 1331

CHAIRMAN'S PA

Surrey - Circa £30,000 pa

Dynamic young chairman requires a well organised, quick thinking PA. City background an asset and Shorthand 120wpm, MS Office and E-Mail a must. Relocating to Dorking, Epsom area in the near future - car a must. Exc. Benefits and a challenging role for a truly professional individual. Start ASAP. Please call:

Neil Ashford - Masterlock Recruitment on 0171 938 1718

RECEPTIONIST / SECRETARY

for small SW1 based company. Must be well presented and have good telephone manner. Typing skills essential, knowledge of French preferred. Salary negotiable.

Please send or fax CV and hand-written covering letter to:

Mrs Alison Murray
20 St. James's Place
London SW1A 1NR
Fax: 0171 493 2243.

CAMELOT**PA to Finance Director**

Watford

Our client Camelot, the operators of The National Lottery are looking to recruit a high calibre PA/Secretary to support their Finance Director at their prestigious head office in Watford.

To work for this new & exciting company you will need at least 3 years senior secretarial experience within a Finance environment. 70wpm typing & 100wpm shorthand, an organised, flexible approach, exceptional interpersonal skills and a thorough knowledge of Microsoft Office are essential for this role.

This is a demanding position for an ambitious PA, who is able to delegate to an Assistant Administrator and who enjoys overseeing the efficient running of a high profile office.

Camelot pride themselves on being an equal opportunities employer & will welcome applications from all sectors of the community.

To take the first step towards an exciting future call NICOLA RANDALL or RUTH GOODMAKER-BROWN on 01923 255625. Office Angels, 68 High Street, Watford.

Office Angels

Recruitment Consultants

Office Co-ordinator
£17,000 + Bens

Leading healthcare group requires a proactive, service-oriented individual to co-ordinate their London business suite. The suite receives high profile visitors and houses permanent office space for the group's executive management. You will oversee the receptionist & support the office manager in all areas of the operation: co-ordinating meeting rooms & catering, monitoring & reporting on budgets, supporting the PR department & troubleshooting operational problems. Ideal if you're flexible, outgoing & used to juggling priorities. Office management or hospitality exp. useful. 45 wpm.

0171-831-1220

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES

The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust is a vibrant, fast moving organisation providing vital accident and emergency services to London's population of over 7 million.

Right now we have two busy and rewarding roles available at our Waterloo Headquarters.

Unit Supervisor
£15,103 - £17,927

Supervising the day-to-day running of our Personnel Administration Unit, you will also be involved in providing secretarial and administrative support to senior management. This will include maintaining production standards, providing technical support and deputising for the Unit Manager when necessary.

If you succeed you will need proven supervisory ability coupled with sound interpersonal and organisational skills. Previous secretarial experience of a senior level is essential and computer literacy would be a distinct advantage.

For an application pack, please write, stating which post you are applying for, to: NHS Trust, Personnel Department, London Ambulance Service NHS Trust, 220 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8SD. Closing date for receipt of application forms is 22 January 1997.

The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust is committed to Equal Opportunities. We also operate a smoke-free workplace.

LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE
NHS TRUST

CUSTOMER ADMINISTRATOR SUPERVISOR
£20,000

ISLEWORTH

An outstanding opportunity has arisen for a committed, resourceful individual to secure a key post, handling all aspects of customer related training & admin, on behalf of a prestigious Blue Chip Company. Experience of working in a supervisory capacity within an IT or Finance field essential.

SECRETARY
£16,000 BENTFORD

Ideal for those with sound French & MS Office skills this busy post will really keep you busy, looking after a team of lively European Executives. Providing core secretarial support, this post offers an excellent scope for career progression & a wide range of Company benefits.

To find out more, please call SUE or RAQUEL on 0181 572 5787 251 High Street, Hounslow, Middlesex TW9 1EA.

Office Angels

Recruitment Consultants

Chelsea Charm
£17,000 p.a.

This property co. requires a young, dynamic secretary with good all round skills, to field calls, deal closely with management and generally use their initiative to become the backbone within a very environment.

JOYCE GUNDS
0171 569 6067

RECRUITMENT
COMPANY

68 MARLBOROUGH STREET LONDON W1

GROSVENOR**YOUNG, FREE AND AMBITIOUS?**

ENTERTAINMENT - £14,000

West London Co. seeks a secretary to work in Publishing. Good skills (40+ wpm touch typist) and at least 6 months experience essential. Night, enthusiastic personality important.

BATTERSEA - £13,000

Leisure post in job share, friendly Co. Applicants must be organised, willing to learn and keen to progress. Touch typing (40+ wpm) essential.

WEST LONDON - £13,000

Edute Agency needs responsible secretary to work in its small, busy office. Touch typing, good telephone manner and friendly personality important.

LUXURY TRAVEL - £12,000

Exclusive firm seeks a professional, proactive junior for general office administration. Good prospects in travel, initiative, touch typing (40+) and excellent telephone manner essential.

GROSVENOR BUREAU
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS
TEL: 0171 499 6556 FAX: 0171 493 6320

PA TO DIRECTOR, SALES
£16,000 + BENEFITS

We are an international sports marketing agency dedicated to:

- providing successful sales
- computer literacy / knowledge of MS Office
- a commitment to excellence and attention to detail
- good communication skills
- a record of educational and professional achievement
- a team player with a friendly personality

In return we offer a competitive salary, and a stimulating working environment

Please apply in writing to: P.O. Box 13085 London SW1W 9ZN

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From City smart to Media mad. From team secretary to director's PA. From a day to a year - or Temp to Perm. Call Lisa Cohen on 0171-256 6668.

LOVE & TATE**EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED**
£20,000 - £25,000

1-1 role working for the Chief Executive/Chairman of a prestigious financial services co. To organise the day to day business & personal life of this entrepreneur who wishes to fully delegate tasks to his PA. Shorthand or speedwriting essential.

Please call Kerry or Vicki on

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Fax: 0171 782 7586

SENIOR SECRETARY/PA

18-22K + Bens
Blue Chip Chartered Accountant
WV/EC/CA
Are you a flexible Senior Sec looking for a challenging role with responsibility?
Call Anna Atwood on 0171 405 8457

PA/22-23,000

Only experienced need to call. PA/22-23,000. Excellent salary and benefits. Immediate start. Please call 0171 258 9588. (0171) 258 9588

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

£24,000 + Bens
To work for this dynamic Global Sales Director. You will have the ability to work on your own initiative. Interface with clients, be numerate and creative. Excellent secretarial skills essential and European languages desirable.
Call 0171 438 5881
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1855, 1865, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905, 1915, 1925, 1935, 1945, 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005, 2015, 2025, 2035, 2045, 2055, 2065, 2075, 2085, 2095, 2105, 2115, 2125, 2135, 2145, 2155, 2165, 2175, 2185, 2195, 2205, 2215, 2225, 2235, 2245, 2255, 2265, 2275, 2285, 2295, 2305, 2315, 2325, 2335, 2345, 2355, 2365, 2375, 2385, 2395, 2405, 2415, 2425, 2435, 2445, 2455, 2465, 2475, 2485, 2495, 2505, 2515, 2525, 2535, 2545, 2555, 2565, 2575, 2585, 2595, 2605, 2615, 2625, 2635, 2645, 2655, 2665, 2675, 2685, 2695, 2705, 2715, 2725, 2735, 2745, 2755, 2765, 2775, 2785, 2795, 2805, 2815, 2825, 2835, 2845, 2855, 2865, 2875, 2885, 2895, 2905, 2915, 2925, 2935, 2945, 2955, 2965, 2975, 2985, 2995, 3005, 3015, 3025, 3035, 3045, 3055, 3065, 3075, 3085, 3095, 3105, 3115, 3125, 3135, 3145, 3155, 3165, 3175, 3185, 3195, 3205, 3215, 3225, 3235, 3245, 3255, 3265, 3275, 3285, 3295, 3305, 3315, 3325, 3335, 3345, 3355, 3365, 3375, 3385, 3395, 3405, 3415, 3425, 3435, 3445, 3455, 3465, 3475, 3485, 3495, 3505, 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5175, 5185, 5195, 5205, 5215, 5225, 5235, 5245, 5255, 5265, 5275, 5285, 5295, 5305, 5315, 5325, 5335, 5345, 5355, 5365, 5375, 5385, 5395, 5405, 5415, 5425, 5435, 5445, 5455, 5465, 5475, 5485, 5495, 5505, 5515, 5525, 5535, 5545, 5555, 5565, 5575, 5585, 5595, 5605, 5615, 5625, 5635, 5645, 5655, 5665, 5675, 5685, 5695, 5705, 5715, 5725, 5735, 5745, 5755, 5765, 5775, 5785, 5795, 5805, 5815, 5825, 5835, 5845, 5855, 5865, 5875, 5885, 5895, 5905, 5915, 5925, 5935, 5945, 5955, 5965, 5975, 5985, 5995, 6005, 6015, 6025, 6035, 6045, 6055, 6065, 6075, 6085, 6095, 6105, 6115, 6125, 6135, 6145, 6155, 6165, 6175, 6185, 6195, 6205, 6215, 6225, 6235, 6245, 6255, 6265, 6275, 6285, 6295, 6305, 6315, 6325, 6335, 6345, 6355, 6365, 6375, 6385, 6395, 6405, 6415, 6425, 6435, 6445, 6455, 6465, 6475, 6485, 6495, 6505, 6515, 6525, 6535, 6545, 6555, 6565, 6575, 6585, 6595, 6605, 6615, 6625, 6635, 6645, 6655, 6665, 6675, 6685, 6695, 6705, 6715, 6725, 6735, 6745, 6755, 6765, 6775, 6785, 6795, 6805, 6815, 6825, 6835, 6845, 6855, 6865, 6875, 6885, 6895, 6905, 6915, 6925, 6935, 6945, 6955, 6965, 6975, 6985, 6995, 7005, 7015, 7025, 7035, 7045, 7055, 7065, 7075, 7085, 7095, 7105, 7115, 7125, 7135, 7145, 7155, 7165, 7175, 7185, 7195, 7205, 7215, 7225, 7235, 7245, 7255, 7265, 7275, 7285, 7295, 7305, 7315, 7325, 7335, 7345, 7355, 7365, 7375, 7385, 7395, 7405, 7415, 7425, 7435, 7445, 7455, 7465, 7475, 7485, 7495, 7505, 7515, 7525, 7535, 7545, 7555, 7565, 7575, 7585, 7595, 7605, 7615, 7625, 7635, 7645, 7655, 7665, 7675, 7685, 7695, 7705, 7715, 7725, 7735, 7745, 7755, 7765, 7775, 7785, 7795, 7805, 7815, 7825, 7835, 7845, 7855, 7865, 7875, 7885, 7895, 7905, 7915, 7925, 7935, 7945, 7955, 7965, 7975, 7985, 7995, 8005, 8015, 8025, 8035, 8045, 8055, 8065, 8075, 8085, 8095, 8105, 8115, 8125, 8135, 8145, 8155, 8165, 8175, 8185, 8195, 8205, 8215, 8225, 8235, 8245, 8255, 8265, 8275, 8285, 8295, 8305, 8315, 8325, 8335, 8345, 8355, 8365, 8375, 8385, 8395, 8405, 8415, 8425, 8435, 8445, 8455, 8465, 8475, 8485, 8495, 8505, 8515, 8525, 8535, 8545, 8555, 8565, 8575, 8585, 8595, 8605, 8615, 8625, 8635, 8645, 8655, 8665, 8675, 8685, 8695, 8705, 8715, 8725, 8735, 8745, 8755, 8765, 8775, 8785, 8795, 8805, 8815, 8825, 8835, 8845, 8855, 8865, 8875, 8885, 8895, 8905, 8915, 8925, 8935, 8945, 8955, 8965, 8975, 8985, 8995, 9005, 9015, 9025, 9035, 9045, 9055, 9065, 9075, 9085, 9095, 9105, 9115, 9125, 9135, 9145, 9155, 9165, 9175, 9185, 9195, 9205, 9215, 9225, 9235, 9245, 9255, 9265, 9275, 9285, 9295, 9305, 9315, 9325, 9335, 9345, 9355, 9365, 9375, 9385, 9395, 9405, 9415, 9425, 9435, 9445, 9455, 9465, 9475, 9485, 9495, 9505, 9515, 9525, 9535, 9545, 9555, 9565, 9575, 9585, 9595, 9605, 9615, 9625, 9635, 9645, 9655, 9665, 9675, 9685, 9695, 9705, 9715, 9725, 9735, 9745, 9755, 9765, 9775, 9785, 9795, 9805, 9815, 9825, 9835, 9845, 9855, 9865, 9875, 9885, 9895, 9905, 9915, 9925, 9935, 9945, 9955, 9965, 9975, 9985, 9995, 10005, 10015, 10025, 10035, 10045, 10055, 10065, 10075, 10085, 10095, 10105, 10115, 10125, 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Trainers find planning hard going

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FOOTBALL

Points deduction adds to pressure on Middlesbrough

By DAVID MADDOCK

THE stony glare offered by Bryan Robson as he left Lancaster Gate told the story: it had not been a good day for Middlesbrough. In the morning, Fabrizio Ravanelli, their most expensive player, claimed that the team was doomed to relegation. In the afternoon, that possibility was increased when Middlesbrough had three points deducted by the FA Premier League.

Robson, the manager, and Keith Lamb, the chief executive, were in London to answer charges relating to the scheduled game against Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park on December 21, which Middlesbrough failed to fulfil.

Robson had claimed that no fewer than 23 of his players were ill or unavailable, and independently cancelled the match, suggesting that it would be unfair to supporters to field an under-strength team. An inquiry was launched and the result, yesterday, was that Middlesbrough were fined £50,000 by a disciplinary commission and ordered to pay the costs of the hearing, as well as losing three points. Having started the day bottom of the FA Carling Premiership, they now find themselves four points adrift of Southampton.

It was a surprising decision, not least because of the precedents. In 1994, the Football Association, having imposed a six-point deduction on Tottenham Hotspur for financial irregularities committed

under a previous regime, was forced to withdraw its punishment after the club pursued the matter in the courts.

The Premier League decided, however, that there was good reason, in this case, to take such action. "We concluded that Middlesbrough did not have just cause to unilaterally cancel the match," Mike Lee, a Premier League spokesman, said.

Middlesbrough have the right of appeal, and the question of compensation to Blackburn will be addressed in due course by the board of the FA Premier League.

Robson refused to comment immediately after the hearing. Lamb said that Middlesbrough would be offering their response after taking legal advice. There were indications, though, that the club would appeal against the deduction of points. It has 14 days to do so. Blackburn

Rovers greeted the news with a degree of satisfaction. They were incensed that their supporters were deprived of the game at short notice, and had asked to be awarded the points from the match. The Premier League did not go that far, but Rovers will still, no doubt, be happy that one of their fellow strugglers has lost three points.

"I think it is only fair. Middlesbrough chose not to consult us about cancelling the game, and it was a major disappointment for our fans," Tony Parkes, the Blackburn caretaker manager, said. "On the Continent, it is normal for teams to be awarded the points and a 2-0 victory, and the other team docked points, and we felt that would be fair."

The commission's verdict completed what must have been the worst day of Robson's managerial career. He travelled to London digesting the news that Ravanelli had once more expressed his dissatisfaction with events at the club.

Although the Italy international striker did not say as much in the interview, given to a newspaper in his home-land, he clearly feels less than happy, and it cannot be long before he departs the North East.

"The situation, I am sorry to say, is truly tragic," Ravanelli was quoted as saying. "We are the tailenders, we hardly have any hopes of salvation, and they give us three days off? I went to the training ground, and it was all locked up."

"I was there with Jan Aage Fjortoft [his team-mate] and we could not get in. We just had to make do as best we could. I can't even get angry any more about the situation. We are right at the bottom without hardly any hope — what can I do?"

Ravanelli has expressed his unrest in the past. He has criticised Middlesbrough's training regime, and is clearly frustrated with the practices in England. He has been linked with Manchester United, and it would be no surprise if he were to depart at the end of the season, just ten months after a £7.5 million transfer from Juventus, the European champions.

Robson had just one piece of good news yesterday. Gianluca Festa, the defender, arrived on Teesside for a medical and will complete a £2.7 million transfer from Internazionale today, providing there are no problems.

Festa, 27, is in line to make his Premiership debut on Saturday, against Sheffield Wednesday at the Riverside Stadium.

He will not be partnered, though, by Mirko Tociola, another Italian defender. The Napoli centre half returned to Italy without completing a two-week trial period, and no transfer is likely.

PREMIERSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	12	7	4	1	26	9	45
Man Utd	11	6	3	4	24	16	41
Arsenal	11	5	4	2	21	10	39
Newcastle	11	5	4	2	20	14	39
Wimbledon	11	5	4	2	19	14	39
Sheff Wed	11	5	4	2	18	15	39
Sheff Utd	11	5	4	2	17	16	39
Blackburn	11	5	4	2	16	17	39
Derby	11	5	4	2	15	18	39
Coventry	11	5	4	2	14	19	39
Leicester	11	5	4	2	13	20	39
West Ham	11	5	4	2	12	21	39
Southampton	11	5	4	2	11	22	39
Cardiff	11	5	4	2	10	23	39
Sheff F	11	5	4	2	9	24	39
Reading	11	5	4	2	8	25	39
Millwall	11	5	4	2	7	26	39
Sheff P	11	5	4	2	6	27	39
QPR	11	5	4	2	5	28	39
Watford	11	5	4	2	4	29	39
Sheff W	11	5	4	2	3	30	39
Sheff B	11	5	4	2	2	31	39
Sheff C	11	5	4	2	1	32	39

1 denotes three points deducted

Brighton fans take tough line with FA

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

DISGRUNTLED Brighton and Hove Albion supporters are calling on fans throughout the country to join their latest protest about the impasse at the club. The Brighton Independent Supporters' Association is asking supporters to jam the Football Association's telephone and fax lines in the three days leading up to the England game against Italy on February 12.

John Baine, founder member of the association, said: "The idea behind this protest is to clog the FA ahead of the England game. We have to make people aware that the FA have been spineless in matters concerning the Albion's future, and we want to bring it home fundamentally to them."

"We would like to think that there will be between 4,000 to 5,000 faxes and phone calls. We've already had support from all over the country and our aim is to make it impossible for the FA to function before the England match."

Baine believes breaking the

deadlock in trying to find a way forward for Brighton is the responsibility of the FA. "We're having to fight against them to save our club," he said.

More talks between Bill Archer, the Brighton chairman, and Dick Knight, head of the consortium trying to take over the Noddywide League third division club, are taking place this week.

Shane Nicholson, the West Bromwich Albion defender, seems certain to miss the rest of the season. Nicholson has been out of action since November when his leg developed an infection.

Alan Buckley, the Albion manager, said: "It looks as if Shane could be out for the rest of the season. I hope I am wrong, but he lost a lot of weight when he was laid up and there was also a lot of muscle wastage."

Sheffield United joined the

rush of clubs wishing to float on the Stock Exchange when they completed a reverse takeover deal with Conrad plc, a leisure firm, yesterday.



Brown, who readily sets the right example off the pitch as a teacher at Prince's Mead School, in the spotlight at Woking

Brown turns back for a future

As Kevan Brown leads Woking out against Coventry City at Highfield Road tonight, in the third round of the FA Cup, he may reflect on how good part-time football has been to him.

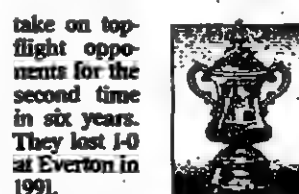
Brown turned his back on the Football League at the age of 26. Having started at Southampton, where he failed to break into the first team, he had played more than 200 matches at Brighton and Aldershot. Three months as cover for Warren Neill during Portsmouth's run to the 1992 FA Cup semi-finals could not, however, disguise the raw memories left by playing without pay for three months in the dying days of Aldershot.

Settled in his home town of Andover, Brown said: "My wife had a good job that she wanted to keep and, with no disrespect to the clubs that were interested in me, I was happy to join a club that was clearly forward looking and at the same time give myself a chance of moving towards a career for when football ended."

The rewards, taken as Woking were starting life in the Vauxhall Conference, have come thick and fast. Winning Wembley appearances in the FA Trophy finals of 1994 and 1995 and four England semi-professional caps among them.

Now, just 31, Brown will take his place at the heart of the Woking defence as they

Walter Gammie finds a role model for the part-time footballer of tomorrow



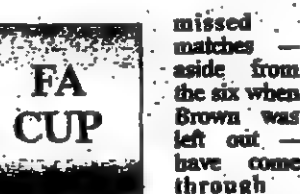
take on top-flight opponents for the second time in six years. They lost 1-0 at Everton in 1991.

The tests of that side and the bold way that Geoff Chapple, the manager, broke it up to bring in Brown and others hung over a stuttering start to Conference life. After 15 games Brown was dropped.

Brown said: "I went in to see Geoff and, as we had been giving away a lot of goals down the middle, said that I had started my career at Southampton playing as a sweeper, and if anybody became injured or he wanted to try something different, I was ready to have a go. I got my chance sooner than I expected and things went pretty well."

Brown says with pride that, since the club has been in the Conference, "we've played 190 games and I've played 178 or 179 of them." His manager, then, has fully come to recognise Brown's worth.

"He's a model of consistency, a very good footballer," Chapple said. Most of those



missed matches — aside from the six when Brown was left out — have come through suspension.

"He's had a fair amount of bookings, which, when you consider what a nice, guy Kevan is, must be down to his will to win and the law about tackling from behind that he suffers from more than most," Chapple said.

Yet the abiding impression of Brown is of calm reading of the game and the neatness and effectiveness of his tackling, whether used as a sweeper or a marker or in Woking's present system as a centre back.

Brown's captaincy is understated. "He's got great leadership qualities," Chapple said. "He can be a little on the quiet side, which doesn't mean to say he doesn't do the job beautifully. You don't need a big mouth to be a captain. We've got plenty of those anyway."

Captain in turn pays tribute to manager: "Geoff's a big one for bowing, attractive football and the players he

brings in seem to fit into the system. Everyone knows what to do. Every now and then, particularly from the back you see something and it's a question of having a quiet word."

Brown admits to suspensions in the past couple of seasons. "I don't think there's any room for a mis-timed tackle any more," he said. "You sometimes hesitate to tackle at all, particularly because referees in the Conference are always assessed and they think they must be seen to do everything by the book."

Setting the right example off the pitch comes equally readily to Brown in his life as a teacher at Prince's Mead School, in Winchester, where gaining qualifications as a swimming coach helped to expand a role of afternoon games master into full-time employment.

The influence of his father, Peter — "a quick, goalscoring inside forward, the total opposite to me," who played for Southampton in the 1950s — was felt in his insistence on Kevan gaining qualifications away from football.

During his years at Southampton Brown gained a B-Tech in business studies and he has recently completed a leisure management course. To add to model player, model captain, Brown may be the model for the part-time footballer of the future.

SKIING

Aamodt's victory spoils the party

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE HOME favourite, Michael von Grünigen, failed in his attempt to win a sweep of three classic World Cup races yesterday when he was made to settle for second place in the giant slalom at Adelboden, Switzerland. Andre Aamodt, of Norway, spoilt his day, improving from fourth to first despite making "a very big mistake" midway through his second run on the Kuonisbergli course.

The victory was Aamodt's first of the season and the thirteenth of his career. "After I nearly went down I thought I had no chance to win here, but then Von Grünigen also made a mistake and that's ski racing. Beating Von Grünigen on his home turf is an achievement."

Von Grünigen, the leader after the first run, appeared poised to collect his third successive win and join Alberto Tomba, of Italy, as the only men to win the giant slalom classics of Alta Badia, Kranjska Gora and Adelboden in the same season.

Victory would virtually have secured the World Cup giant slalom title for Von Grünigen for the second successive year. On the second run, he was urged on by thousands of Swiss supporters lining the course, but he finished 0.15sec behind Aamodt. Andreas Schifferer, from Austria, who was thirteenth after the first leg, had the fastest second run to vault into third place.

Von Grünigen, who has been placed in all but two of the past 15 giant slalom races, was philosophical. "Nobody is unbeatable but it's tough to lose on your home ground," he said. "My second run just was not good enough. Maybe I was trying too hard, but I won this race last year and I'm pleased with a place on the podium. You have to be ready for victory and for defeat."

Von Grünigen remains well placed to win the giant slalom title. With two races remaining and 200 points on offer, he leads Aamodt by 159 points in the discipline. He also leads the overall World Cup standings, 26 points ahead of Aamodt.

Tomba, still bothered by the flu that forced him out of the second leg of the slalom in Chamrousse on Sunday, did not race.

BOXING

Calzaghe aims for world title

By SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

JOE CALZAGHE, the exciting super-middleweight from Wales, could be challenging for a world championship by the end of this year. His promoter, Frank Warren, said yesterday that his opponent could be either Robin Reid, the World Boxing Council (WBC) champion, or Steve Collins, who holds the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) title.

Calzaghe, 24, who remains unbeaten after 19 contests, winning all but one of them inside the distance, has given up his British crown and will not box for the European championship either in order to concentrate his efforts on winning a world title. Calzaghe, who recently moved from his former promoter, Micky Duff, to Warren, will make his first appearance under the new promotional banner at Bristol on January 21, when he will meet José Bayón, of Spain.

Scott Welsh, the Brighton heavyweight, could get a chance to make amends for his poor showing against Henry Akinwande, the WBO champion, in Nashville, Tennessee last Saturday, when he was beaten overwhelmingly on points. Welsh has been lined up to meet François Botha, of South Africa, in March in an eliminator for the WBO title, which Akinwande is expected to relinquish when he challenges the winner of the WBC championship bout between Lennox Lewis and Oliver McCall in Las Vegas on February 7.

Johnny Armour, the former European and Commonwealth bantamweight champion, from Chatham, has his second contest on January 29 after his return to the ring after a spell in prison. He challenges Willie Pea-domo, of the Dominican Republic, for the WBO international championship at York Hall, Bethnal Green.

Russell declines to paint town red

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE decision taken yesterday by Hedgesford Town, on police advice, to concede home advantage in their fourth-round tie against Middlesbrough ensures that, once again, the FA Cup will witness another extreme contrast between football's haves and have-nots.

Lining up at kick-off for the FA Carling Premiership side in the Riverside Stadium on Saturday week will be Fabrizio Ravanelli, the striker who cost them £7.5 million and who is reputedly paid £42,000 a week; ten yards away will be Keith Russell, who cost the Vauxhall Conference club £7,000 and earns around £300 a week as a full-time painter and decorator and part-time footballer.

It was Russell's 43rd-minute goal that earned Hedgesford a 1-0 victory over York City, of the Nationwide League second division, at Keys Park on Monday night, and yesterday he celebrated by going on a shopping spree with friends in Birmingham.

Russell, 22, had decided to spend his hard-earned cash irrespective of the outcome, but scoring the only goal, from the penalty spot, made his day off all the more sweet.

Unlike Ravanelli, there is no grand lifestyle to reward Russell for his endeavours. He takes his own sandwiches to

work and lives in a modest semi-detached house with his father, Roy, and stepmother-to-be, Pat. His idea of a night out is a few beers in the local pub five doors away, where he went on Monday night. Yet there is one area in which Russell prides himself on being on a par with Ravanelli: the desire to succeed.

Russell's hopes dipped when, after a successful trial period with Bournemouth, he was rejected. "He was all set to join them when the manager was sacked and his replacement didn't go through with the offer," his future stepmother said. "If things had happened two months later he would have already been signed up and on his way as a professional."

"It took him a couple of years to get over that, but Keith is on the up again now. He trains three or four nights on his own as well as the sessions he puts in with Hedgesford. He is still so dedicated despite the knock-back he had, and he genuinely believes he will make it."

"That is why this FA Cup run has been brilliant for him and the club, because it projects everyone into the limelight. He's got faith in his ability and that's why he wouldn't be jealous of Ravanelli. He feels he will make it himself one day."

Familiar foes braced for another rough passage

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

FAMILIARITY has bred little but contempt between Arsenal and Sunderland this season, with the fourth instalment — an FA Cup third-round replay at Roker Park tonight — promising similarly rugged fare. It might be heralded as some achievement should the teams finish the tie with 11 players apiece.

In their three previous meetings, ten yellow cards and three red have been handed out, though Paul Stewart's sending-off in the FA Carling Premiership fixture at Highbury in September was later annulled. In the same game, Peter Reid, the Sunderland manager, was banished from the touchline for becoming overemotional amid all the excitement.

On Saturday, in Sunderland's 1-0 home win in the Premiership, Dennis Bergkamp, the Arsenal striker, was dismissed for an uncharacteristic lunge at Paul Bracewell. Five of his team-mates — Nigel Winterburn, Martin Keown, John Harrison, David Platt and Tony Adams — were also cautioned.

It is unlikely in such a short time — it is the clubs' third encounter in 12 days — that the bad feeling will have subsided. Yet it is the league matches that have experienced most of the disciplinary problems,

with the initial 1-1 FA Cup draw at Highbury producing only one booking.

In addition to being without Ian Wright and Harrison because of suspension, Arsenal will have to cope with the fervent home support. "It's going to be tough, very tough," Adams, the Arsenal captain, said yesterday. "The Roker fans are extremely passionate and we will have to try to keep them quiet. Sunderland are a young, well-organised side that work very hard for each other."

Coventry City's upward surge in the Premiership group to a halt at Blackburn on Saturday and they could face another fraught 90 minutes against Woking, of the



Chapple: worried

Vauxhall Conference, in a delayed third-round tie at Highfield Road, Woking, conquerors of West Bromwich Albion at the same stage six years ago, have already beaten Millwall and Cambridge United this season.

Dion Dublin, the Coventry striker-turned-defender, starts a three-match ban — he has been sent off in his last two Premiership matches — but Noel Whelan returns from suspension.

Geoff Chapple, the Woking manager, is more worried by overconfidence from the Surrey club's supporters than the threat of the opposition. "With our past Cup record, the fans have been spoilt," he said.

"They actually expect us to beat Coventry." Charlton Athletic face a daunting task against Newcastle United in a third-round replay, but are not without hope after their admirable 1-1 draw at The Valley ten days ago.

"We have to approach it positively," Alan Curtisley, the Charlton manager, said yesterday. "We have to go looking for a win. What with everything that has been going on at Newcastle, I'm sure the atmosphere is going to be at fever pitch. There will be a lot of emotion, but we've just got to try to ignore it."

West Ham target Van Hooijdonk

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

WEST Ham United's infatuation with foreign players continues. Peter Storrie, the FA Carling Premiership club's managing director, was in Scotland last night to open preliminary negotiations with Pierre van Hooijdonk, the Holland and Celtic striker, and Tommy Burns, the Glasgow club's manager, after the premier division game against Raith Rovers.

Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, a long-time admirer of Van Hooijdonk, is willing to pay £3 million for a player who scored twice for Holland, as a second-half substitute, in their 3-1 defeat of Wales in a World Cup qualifying match in Cardiff in October.

"I've always rated him very highly," Redknapp said. "and it's no secret that we're looking for a centre forward." West Ham have had several disappointments among their European signings. Jeron Boers, Marco Boogers, Dani, Paolo Futre and Ili Dumi-rescu making little impact at Upton Park.

To help fund Van Hooijdonk's transfer, Redknapp is hoping to offload another of his foreign legion, Florin Raducioiu, the Romania international. He is believed to be trying to persuade Espanol, the Spanish first division side which sold Raducioiu to West

Ham for £2.4 million during the summer, to take him back. West Ham have so far paid only £600,000 of the agreed fee.

With the remaining £1.8 million which had been budgeted for Raducioiu, plus £800,000 received from the sale of Dumitrescu to a Mexican club and £600,000 raised from Tony Cottee's transfer to Selangor, of Malaysia, Redknapp would be able to finance the deal for the Celtic centre forward.

Arsenal have defied, through a club spokesman, making a bid of £2.5 million for Christophe Dugarry, the France and AC Milan striker.

Dugarry, 24, joined Milan from Bordeaux last summer after playing for France in the early stages of Euro 96. He missed the defeat by the Czech Republic in the semi-final, decided on penalties, because of injury.

With Ian Wright and John Harrison suspended, and Dennis Bergkamp also due to sit out three games after being sent off against Sunderland last Saturday, Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, is short of top-class strikers. Dugarry was yesterday selected in France's 18-strong squad to play Portugal in an international match in Braga on January 22.

RUGBY UNION

Wainwright restored as Scotland captain

BY MARK SOUSTER

HAVING proved his fitness and been included as one of only three back-row forwards in the original 21-man squad announced last week, it was a formality yesterday that Rob Wainwright would be restored to the Scotland side, both as a player and captain.

He was present at the press conference at which the team to play Wales on Saturday was announced. It shows four changes, three among the forwards, from that which beat Italy in December. Damian Cronin and Eric Peters have been dropped and Ian Smith is injured. Gary Armstrong will play at scrum half in place of Bryan Redpath.

At the age of 31, having recovered from surgery on longstanding groin and Achilles' heel injuries, Wainwright will win his 25th cap and lead Scotland for the eighth time.

TEAM

SCOTLAND: R J S Shepherd (Moray); A G Stanger (Perth); S Hastings (Perth); G P J Townsend (Northampton); K M Logan (Swing County); C M Chalmers (Edinburgh); G Armstrong (Glasgow); D W Hiron (Barn); K D Macdonald (Swing County); M Stewart (Northampton); P Wilson (Newcastle); G W Wainwright (Edinburgh); C R Reid (Glasgow); A J Reid (Worcester); M J Wallace (Glasgow); R I Wainwright (Edinburgh); B R S Erskine (London Scottish); B W Redpath (Moray); D S Murray (Glasgow); T J Smith (Worcester); D G Ellis (Carmarthen).

from No 8. "I am very proud to be back," Wainwright said. "Playing for your country is special, but leading the team is something else. Having tasted that experience, you want more."

Wainwright, a doctor, who is hoping to avoid being posted to Bosnia, with his Army unit later this year, said: "It might have been difficult coming back under a different captain but Gregor [Townsend] and I have a good working relationship."

Provided he performs to his own high standards in the five nations championship, Wainwright, who ideally would have played more than four comeback games, must be a candidate to lead the British Isles to South Africa in the summer.

Wainwright said the Army were "quite keen to send me to Bosnia. I am not sure how long it would be for. They are very accommodating about my rugby, and they would realise it would not be in their best interests to send me to Bosnia for a year. It certainly

would not be in mine either but I know there has been that about sending me over there. It is a matter of trying to combine my commitments in rugby and the commitments of my career."

Despite continued debate, Townsend, who led Scotland in the past three internationals, finds himself still at inside centre rather than at stand-off half, where Craig Chalmers, who will be winning his fiftieth cap, once again links up with Armstrong, a partnership which has served Scotland well since 1990.

The backs boast 241 caps between them and it is testament to the attitude and staying power of players such as the half backs and Tony Stanger and Scott Hastings, all stalwarts of the 1990 grand slam side, that they have overcome various setbacks to once again become first choices.

Indeed David Johnston, coach to the backs, paid tribute to Chalmers' ability to change his style. "He has transformed his game over the past year. He has taken the knocks and come back well."

It is believed Johnston fought long and hard for Chalmers' retention at a lengthy meeting of the selectors on Monday, persuading his colleagues that the progress shown by the back division, particularly against Italy, should not be interrupted by switching Townsend back to No 10.

Scotland have scored six tries in their past two internationals, all by wings, and Johnston believes that the hard work which has been put in is gradually starting to bear fruit as Scotland look to play a more fluid game.

There is a less-experienced look to the forwards, the most capped of whom is Doddie Weir, who partners Andy Reid in the second row. After two lacklustre performances, the pack needs to produce a more dynamic approach. Cl Robert Howley, the Cardiff scrum half, failed to complete yesterday's Wales training session because of a hamstring injury, although Kevin Bowring, the national coach, expressed optimism that he would have recovered by the weekend. Scott Gibbs, who captained Wales against the United States last Saturday, is still troubled by the knee injury he picked up in that game but is expected to be fit to train today.



A last-ditch effort by Mullins, the Australia full back, fails to stop Davies from scoring in the corner. Photograph: Mike Hewitt/Allsport

Ringmaster Davies is top of the bill

Christopher Irvine, in the last of our series, reflects on how a genius at both codes of rugby would not be denied at Wembley

In both codes of rugby football, great tries are invariably associated with special individuals, and no player has blazed a trail of glory in the two arenas quite like Jonathan Davies.

Arrogance is sometimes misinterpreted in sport. The self-belief that Davies has is not boastful. It simply tells him that he can beat his man and pull off the outrageous. One moment at Wembley, on October 22, 1994, is burnt into the memory as sublime arrogance.

In 12 previous appearances for the Great Britain rugby league team, Davies had not faced the might of Australia. Two days before Davies' 32nd birthday, Australian commentators wondered why he was there. In the media room at Wembley, over half-time tea, one Sydney journalist, gowned up to his gaffe, "Jonathan's still an old man," he said, "but geez he's quick."

Speed off the mark and an antenna for the nearest game were two of the traits that prompted Wines to sign Davies from his rugby union club, Llanelli, in 1989. A year before that black day for Welsh rugby union, Davies, a small man from Trimsaran, roused a nation with probably his finest try for Wales in a 25-20 defeat of Scotland. It was instinctive, daring and, yes, arrogant. He took a

ballooned reverse pass from Robert Jones from a scrum inside the Scotland 22, cut inside and chased his immediate grubber-kick.

Given the greater space and attacking opportunities inherent in rugby league, Davies, in that code, was like a child in a sweetshop. Any number of tries stick out as examples of Davies the showman. Quick hands and quicker feet outwitted bigger, more experienced opponents.

He became rugby league's Barnum, and, at club level, his act was at its most brilliant one perishing January afternoon at Halifax. Seemingly non-existent gaps opened up for two solo tries for Warrington in the Challenge Cup.

Before he faced Australia, whom he rates as the best team in either code, Davies had not enjoyed the best of times on his only other visit to Wembley, a losing appearance for Wales in the 1993 Challenge Cup final. 1994, and the arrival of Australia, was different. The sudden resignation of Malcolm Reilly, the coach, gave Ellery Hanley seven weeks to sort out a Great Britain side.

THE GREATEST TRY



I EVER SAW

There were injuries galore and players were selected out of position, including Davies, a centre at Warrington, at full back.

Australia had swept all before them on the road to Wembley. With predictable

and fear of not letting one another down, once Shaun Edwards, the captain, had been sent off for a moment of uncharacteristic madness.

How Britain turned potential disaster to their advantage is now part of league folklore, as much as the defeats of Australia in 1914 in Sydney and in Brisbane in 1988, when Britain both times finished with only ten players. A man down in the modern era can place impossible constraints, and Edwards' dreadful high tackle, in the 25th minute, looked to have knocked Britain out as effectively as it had Bradley Clyde.

Twelve minutes later Wembley erupted. The old place had, six months before, witnessed a spectacular score by Martin Offiah for Wigan that many felt could not be bettered. Davies trumped it with a match-winning try out of the blue.

Bobbie Goulding began the raid in breaking left from a scrum on the Britain 20-metre line. Laurie Daley, the Australia stand-off half, was wrong-footed and the opposition cover drawn.

'Quick hands and quicker feet outwitted bigger opponents'

passivism, Alex Murphy declared that Great Britain had no chance. Davies, as usual, was a bag of nerves. His bee-line for the toilet before games is now legend.

It was fear that drove the Britain side that rainy Saturday afternoon, fear of losing

Davies saw the potential and tracked right. By now Alan Hunte was making ground down the left. Offiah advanced the move another 25 metres. He looked to have taken a wrong option by stepping inside and being stopped. In hindsight, it was right. Brett Mullins, the Australia full back, had been drawn crossfield by the danger and, as the ball whipped right via Hunte, Goulding, Phil Clarke and Denis Betts, who created room for Davies 40 metres out, he was struggling to get back.

Half a dummy left Steve Renouf in two minds and Davies was through the gap between him and Brad Fittler. He was now in the clear, with Gary Connolly and Jason Robinson in support. There was no way that Davies was going to deny himself, nor was Mullins going to prevent him. Mullins made a despairing grab for his ankles, but Davies launched himself and scored full-stretch at the right corner.

The shuddering tackles made by Davies in an 8-4 victory were equally memorable, but a partially dislocated shoulder forced him to miss the last quarter. Shorn of his inspiration, Great Britain lost the series 2-1. When Davies was appointed MBE, in January 1995, that try was highlighted as his finest.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Gloucester insist Greening is staying

GLOUCESTER, one of the few first division rugby union clubs still fielding home-grown players, have announced that Phil Greening, the England replacement hooker, is not for sale. Greening, 21, has been the subject of substantial bids from three clubs (David Hands writes).

The club also hopes to establish a code of conduct regulating the way in which players are approached by rival clubs. "If clubs want to approach Phil again they need to come to us for permission before talking to him or his agent," David Foyle, the club chairman, said. "Gloucester have some talented youngsters and our intention is to keep them and build for ourselves, not be a breeding ground for other clubs."

Salford signings

Rugby League Salford Reds will add to the veteran status of their pack for the forthcoming season with the signings today of David Hulme, 32, and Esene Faimola, 30, both from Leeds. They follow the arrival at The Willows last week of two other former international forwards, Andy Platt, 33, and John Cartwright, 30.

The newly appointed administrators of Hull Kingston Rovers hope to persuade the local authority to allow them to sell some of the land surrounding the club's Craven Park ground to ease debts of nearly £1 million. The club has assets of more than £25 million.

Price in final

Bowls: John Price, of Swansea, who is attempting to win the CIS Welsh indoor singles title for the fifth time in succession, and for the ninth time in 17 years, qualified for the final at the Selwyn Samuel Centre, Llanelli, yesterday with a comfortable 7-2, 7-2 victory over his young rival, Gareth Williams, from Pembroke.

Event cancelled

Athletics: The Los Angeles Invitational, the second oldest indoor meeting in the United States, will not be staged this year because organisers could not find a sponsor. The event had been scheduled for February 15 at the Los Angeles Sports Arena.

No 2 seeds fall

Real tennis: Chris Bray and James Male, the No 2 seeds, were defeated 6-6, 6-5, 6-3 by Hugh Latham and David Johnson, the unseeded Queen's Club professionals, in the quarter-finals of the BNB Resources professional doubles championship yesterday.

MOTOR RACING: MCLAREN BOSS LEARNS FROM MISTAKES IN PLANNING REVIVAL OF FORTUNES IN FORMULA ONE

Dennis burns links with Marlboro's past glories

BY OLIVER HOIT

THERE is a museum of sorts at the Woking headquarters of McLaren, a long gallery in which are ranged seven or eight Formula One cars. By the side of each cockpit, famous names redolent with the history of the sport and with the dominance of McLaren are inscribed. Senna, Prost, Schumacher, Alesi, Prost, Senna: all are there.

Yesterday, though, when the team unveiled next season's model, the McLaren-Mercedes that it hopes will end the drought of victories that has lasted for three seasons, the guests who trooped past the gallery noticed that something was missing. For a minute or two, most struggled to place what exactly it was. Then it hit them.

The name of Marlboro, the cigarette brand that became synonymous with McLaren throughout all their glory years in the mid-Eighties, had been stripped from every car. It seemed sinister, at first, a bit like a Stalinist incursion into

Formula One, an attempt to turn a fallen former favourite into a non-company, to wipe it from the records.

It was down to Ron Dennis, the McLaren managing director, some people said, another example of his causticness. Others said it showed a lack of grace, that it should not matter that the association with Marlboro ended at the close of last season and that Dennis is now trying to please a new cigarette sponsor, the German company, West.

Dennis has had his share of brickbats in the past. Some, perhaps, have been deserved. But this, perhaps, is different. It is hard to criticise a man for wanting to block out the leading symbol of a bright and successful past because he is so intent on forging a brighter future.

Dennis, in fact, was a fascinating study yesterday, a man at the crossroads between failure and success, as he and his drivers, David Coulthard and Mika Hakkinen, talked about the struggle to get back to the top step of the rostrum. This was the other side of Dennis, the one he rarely



Hakkinen, left, and Coulthard with the new McLaren

exposes to public view, deeply thoughtful, intelligent, full of insights into his own modus operandi.

He was even willing to talk about where it all gone wrong since the season when his team won 15 out of 16 races, when its domination made

Williams' recent successes look like a shaky rule in contrast. He admitted to mistakes, too, which was a bigger shock than the bright orange paint plastered over the new car where red and white once used to be.

"We got to a stage when we

were winning everything, where we got too confident," Dennis said. "It was almost as if we were daring ourselves to take a wheel off the wagon and see if we could still win, see if we could win with five gears while all the other cars had six. Confidence is a weakness. I think it is a destructive force. We will never let that happen again."

"It did not help back then that I was firmly under the impression that Honda would stay with us in 1993. I was under that impression because I was told they were going to stay by someone who should have known. That was an error of judgment on my part, but it was one factor in a complex situation."

"In 1993, I could not really afford Ayrton Senna, but I afforded him to the detriment of the car. Then, a lot of the highly technical aspects of racing that we excelled in were banned. It was back to basics and we had left basics behind years ago."

Slowly, though, McLaren have begun to climb their way back towards the top. They did not win a race last year, but

they clung on to their place in the sport's big four teams and their new car drew admiring glances all round yesterday.

Coulthard admits that he and Hakkinen are hardly the best of friends, but their talent, more power from a steadily improving Mercedes engine and the increased performance of the chassis should result in them at least gaining a brief foothold on the winner's rostrum next season.

"Through all the last three years," Dennis said, "I have not allowed myself negative thoughts. If being a boss means being a leader, you do not have the luxury of self-pity. I call the couple of seconds between when I wake up and when my feet hit the floor as I get out of bed my 'sorrow period'. That is all I allow myself."

"I am not going to make any predictions about the new car because we just don't know how it is going to perform yet. It looks nice, but for me, I would not care if it was a flying brick as long as it crossed the line first."

BASKETBALL

Byrd to divide time between two sports

BY NICHOLAS HARLING

ALTON BYRD will not sever his ties with Crystal Palace basketball club despite resigning as coach to become general manager of the London Monarchs American football team.

"I've only stepped back from coaching," Byrd, 39, said yesterday. "I haven't resigned as a director or shareholder. In the long term this could be a good experience for both me and Palace as it will allow me to focus on things that may solidify the club."

A pioneer among American players who came to Britain in the Seventies, Byrd says his decision has nothing to do with the visit to Hemel Hempstead on Saturday when Palace became the first team in 26 years to lose to the bottom club in the Budweiser League.

"My mind was already made up," he said. "The Monarchs had already asked me twice. The more I thought about it, the more I thought it would be beneficial to me." It was as presenter of Sports

America on Radio 5 Live that Byrd established strong links with American football.

Palace will not, on his recommendation, be seeking a new coach but will rely on Kevin Hibbs, their assistant coach. "We're going to stick with what we've got," Byrd said. "What would be the point of making a short-term appointment which may prove to be totally wrong?"

With the 5ft 8in San Francisco-born Byrd, a dextrous dribbler, Palace were one of the original powers in the domestic game until he left for a five-year stay with Livingston. Countless honours and four clubs later, Byrd, now a naturalised Englishman, returned as player-coach to Palace, who had long since resigned themselves to life outside the Budweiser League. Under his guidance they won successive first division and play-off doubles before gaining promotion last summer, since when they have won only three league games.

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هكذا من الأصل

Anthea Turner who, after looking high and low for a suitable vehicle for her talents, stumbled across *Pet Power* (ITV). This proved to be a cross between *999*, *Heart of Gold* and *Channel 4's Absolutely Animals*. Bit of a mongrel, then.

To judge by the first programme, the big problem is not Anthea but finding sufficient material. Tess, the lifesaving Labrador, was a great story ("we've recreated the heart-stopping events using actors and one animal actor") but clearly some years out of date. A rather elderly and plump Labrador

Still, I enjoyed Popeye, the jealous parrot, who has set wife against husband and in his spare time strips wallpaper. According to a parrot behaviourist (I don't recall one of those on *What's My Line?*) it's because his cage is too high. Nothing worse than a parrot pecking above his perch, is there?

**Matthew
Bond**



an Lukis, last seen playing Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice*). I hope he's brought enough jumpers.

Rudolf Nureyev wasn't much of a pullover man — berets and turbans were more his thing, as we discovered in *Omnibus: Dancing with Darkness* (BBC1) when a succession of elaborate headgear passed before us. The timing of the film was curious (fourth anniversary

No dissenting voices were countenanced and — barring a brief descent into a former New York bath-house — no startling revelations sought. Nureyev was gay, was diagnosed HIV-positive in 1984 and spent the last decade of his life battling against age and Aids. The story of that final

divide him. She later went on to talk emotionally about Nureyev's return to the Kirov in the late 1980s, when his performance failed to come up to the towering expectations of her young students: "Children, you must not think now of his pirouettes, look at how he is acting." It was all very moving, but after prolonged exposure just a little bit cloying. Did nobody have a nasty word to say?

Still, I enjoyed Popeye, the jealous parrot, who has set wife against husband and in his spare time strips wallpaper. According to a parrot behaviourist (I don't recall one of those on *What's My Line?*) it's because his cage is too high. Nothing worse than a parrot settling above his perch, is there?

PERIOD

6.00am SESAME STREET (21570) 7.00 **TV**
Big Bird's Backyard (32026) 8.00 **News**
(728) 9.30 **Schoolhouse Rock** (15412) 10.00
The Mouse House (53080) 12.30**pm**
Here's One I Made Earlier (99312) 1.00
Grainshaw Paints Countable Countable
(36115) 1.30 **Blacksmith** (dw) A Bustle
Keaton short (3195263)

1.50 FILM: Meet Me After the Show (9511)
The most starring Betty Goss and
Candace Carroll in a Broadway-style
walks out of her producer husband's
show when he begins flirting with other
women. Directed by Richard Sade
(82689115)

3.00 COLLECTOR'S LOT (1) (467) 4.00
Fifteen-To-One (1) (202) 4.30 **Comedy**
(1) (486) 5.00 **TV** (1) (95953116)
5.45 **Food File** (1) (9937338)

6.00 PARTY OF FIVE Julia questions her
rekindled romance with Griffin while
Bailey sees Will falling under the spell
of his new college room-mate (1) (22296959)

6.00 FRESH POP featuring Susie (9854342)

7.00 CHANNEL & NEWS (1) (972202)

7.55 THE SLOT (20134)

8.00 BROOKSIDE Georgia makes a decision
about her future with Nat. Will Terry finish

CE


meel his mother? (1) (7253)

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Pete McCarthy on Vanuatu (8.30pm)

8.30 **CHOICE** TRAVELLOG Pete McCarthy reports on the Pacific Island Vanuatu (1/8) (7) (6319)

9.00 **HEROES OF COMEDY: JOYCE GRENFELL** A portrait of the gentle woman who captivated audiences from the 1930s to the mid-1970s. Among those paying tribute to her are Sir David Niven and Sir John Gielgud.

10.00 ER **FRENCH** American medical drama
Jeanie faces a difficult dilemma as she begins treatment for HIV if she pays for through her medical insurance he employer will discover her condition
Greene and Lewis go closer after chance meeting on a double date as there's good and bad news on the proposed hospital closure (T) (2689)

11.00 FRIENDS: **The One with the Brea-**
Milik Aran of the hugely successful
American sitcom. Carol and her lesbian
lover Susan leave Ross in charge of baby
Ben for the weekend and Joey's nose
put out of joint by the arrival of a
new saleswoman (T) (7408)

11.30 CHEERS Boston bar comedy. Rebecca
is ludicrous when a temporary waitress
starts work and begins to receive more
male attention than herself. Starring Ted
Danson and Kirsty Alley (F) (T) (19650)

12.00 UNDER THE MOON Live sports
magazine includes American Football
- The Championship Games and
Worldwide Sport (7896505)

4.00am SCHOOLS (8286103)

5.20 BACKDATE (F) (1237332)

1.63 Baker Hae
 SP2006/05 1.18 Hae
 Ruzalski (14307)
 2.30 Ashraf Hae
 0.00 Hae and Hae
 3.00 Armu (42738)
 Hae (8779641)
 0.00 Hae and Hae
 Bananas in Pyjamas
 BSC (30670)
 1991/12 BSC
 2.00 Little Bear
 Hae BSC (85979)
 0.00 Hae and Hae
 4.30 Ruzalski
 171467.00 Sister
 and Kid (4688)
 7.00 Zoo Animal
 0.00 Hae and Hae
 1920 7.00 Benson
 and LAF (8573) BSC
 0.00 BSC (816)
 0.10 Wings
 on Underground
 Presents (5017)
 1974 Saturday
 0.00 Hooperman

1.45 The Gordon Eclair Show (8555/020)
 2.30 The Agony Express (1317844) 3.00
 Live at (19465844) 4.05 The John
 1974/05/05 1.00 Long Long
 7527115.50 Lucy Luskale (131366)
 0.00 Dream of Journey (8594157) 4.05
 Ruzalski 3.00 Ruzalski (8200883) 7.00
 Bookstore (1391115) 7.40 Who's Secret
 Now? (5217635) 8.05 Rolanda (8447000)
 1974/05/05 1.00 Little Bear
 11.00-12.00 Erogenous Zone (6687819)

FAMILY CHANNEL

5.00pm Bookstore (7985) 8.30 Through
 the Catalyst (0347) 8.00 All Closed Up 2.00
 7.00 Kynch (2912) 7.00 The Pym
 Game (299) 7.30 Hae to Hae (54611) 11.00
 0.00 Hae and Hae (8594157) 4.05 The
 John (4399) 7.00 Ruzalski (8200883) 7.00
 Bookstore (1391115) 7.40 Who's Secret
 Now? (5217635) 8.05 Rolanda (8447000)
 11.00-12.00 Erogenous Zone (6687819)

2.00 Hae to Hae (8594157) 3.00 Low Grand
 (79743) 4.05 All Together Now 13212
 4.30-5.00 The Back Story (49210)

MTV

The 24 hour music channel includes
 news, reviews, live concert footage, inter-
 views and the latest music video charts

VH-1

7:30P (23/00) 2.00
TV 13.00 **Cartoon**
Cartoon (7/8/79) 5.30

7:00P
 (103/16496) 1.00pm
 (12/16) 2.00 **Debut**
 1.00 **Space** 1959
The Outside Man
 of the Sent
 and Hopkin
 to Narnia
 (11/6569)
 net Land (5/8/85)

6:50 Time Travel
 (11/7232) 7.40
 (12/16) 8.30
 (9/33009) 0.00
 (5/853134) 9.10
 (12/16) 9.50 **Spring**
The Young and
 the 11.55 **Brookside**
 Call the Doctor
 (5/853134)

Video hits channel. Classic rock and pop videos and the best new sounds

ZEE TV

7:00P **Jugan** 7.30 **Life Style** 8.30
Positive Health 9.00 **Bengali** 9.30
Ever Jumbo 10.30 **Abhinav** 11.00
 12.00 **Marcel** 11.30 **Dance** 11.40
 12.00 **Dance** 12.30 **Nature** 1.00 **TV**
 1.00 **Remedy** 1.30 **Remedy** 1.30
Special and **Azhan** 4.30 **Public** **Dance**
 5.00 **ZEE Zone** 5.30 **AKR** 5.40 **Campus**
 6.00 **TV** 6.30 **TV** 7.00 **Karnal** **Nature**
 7.30 **Beauty** **Art** 8.00 **News** and
Entertainment 8.30 **Devotion** 8.00 **Yrda** **Sho**
 Father 10.00 **Hi** **Hi** **Hi** 10.30 **Pop**
 11.00 **Mano** **Hi** **Hi** **Hi** 11.30

CARTOON NETWORK/TNT

Cartoon **Cartoons** **from** **Sony** **to** **Sony**
 then **TNT** **hits** **as** **below**
FLUX **Intren** **Art** **Cartoon** (10/853134) 1.00
The Formula (1980) (5/853134) 1.00
The Doctor's Dilemma (1981) (5/853134) 1.00
The Glass (1981) (5/853134) 1.00

